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Battle for Amritsar

From K.S. Khosla

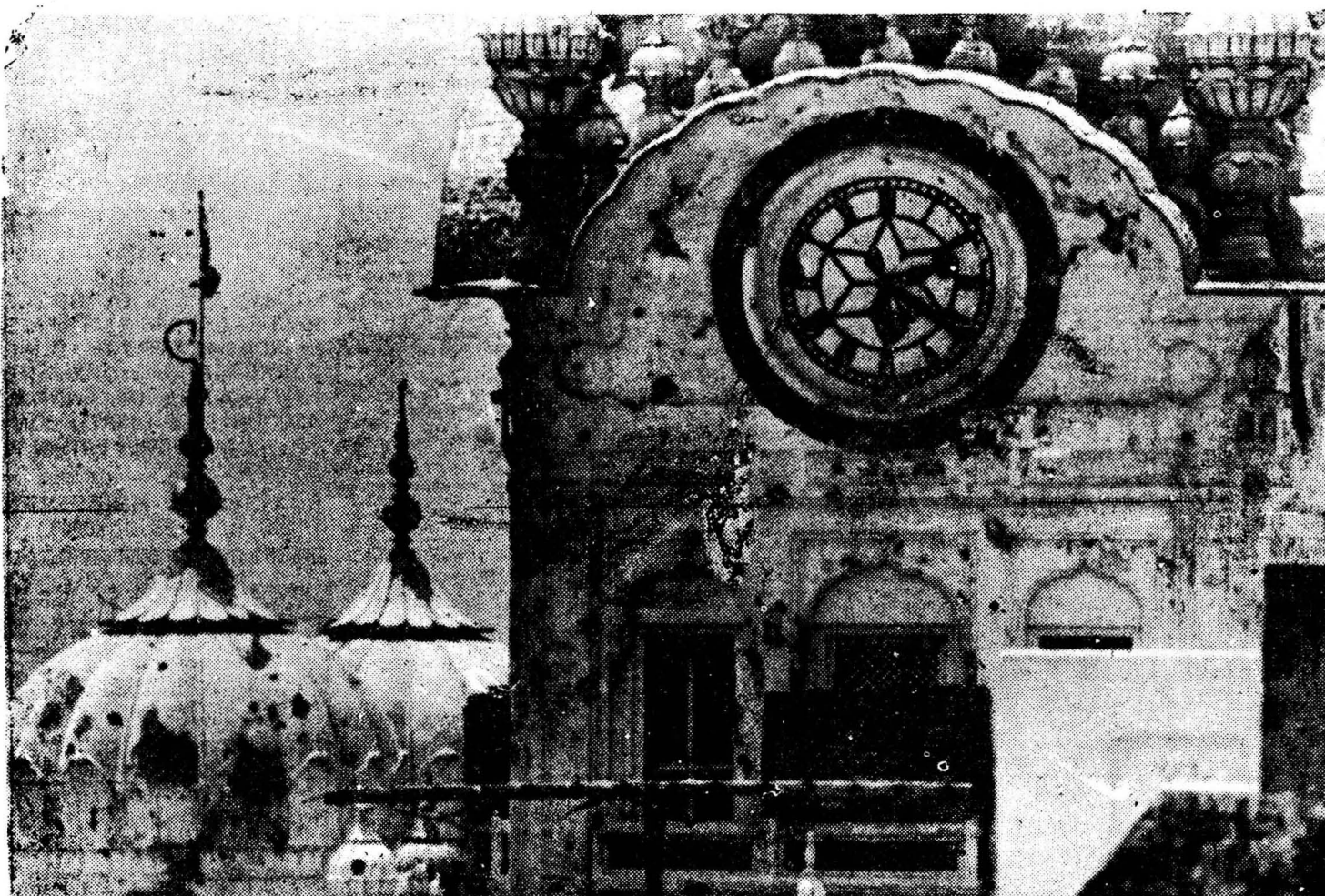
While there can be no two opinions about rooting out terrorism and anti-national forces from Punjab and one must appreciate the commendable restraint with which the security forces are acting this time. There is no need for celebrations over the arrest of 160 persons from the Golden Temple. Fighting by the Army or the para-military forces against its own people, however misguided, is not a matter for jubilation but for sorrow. It is indeed strange that the electronic and other media in the country is projecting the assault against the terrorists as "victory" as if the security forces are fighting a war against an invading foreign power.

Lessons Learnt

It seems the government has learnt the lessons of the Bluestar operation but not fully. Though the Army in its swift action was able to vanquish Bhindranwale and his men but unwittingly the operation made sant Jarnal Singh Bhindranwale a cult figure, whose ghost still looms large on the Punjab horizon and remains the main motivating force behind the continuing terrorism and demand for Khalistan, even though by the lunatic fringe of the Sikh community.

One cannot but agree with Lt.Gen. (retired) Jagjit Singh Aurora, Rajya Sabha M.P., that there is still no realisation of the advantages of healing the wounds by making a generous gesture. General Aurora said in

continued on page 5.



The clock tower in the Golden Temple complex caught in the crossfire between the terrorists and the security forces, with bullet marks all over, the damaged clock and the fortifications beneath the clock put up by the terrorists

"Communalism will destroy the country"

says Lt.Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora

(From our Special correspondent)

New Delhi, May 1985, Presiding over a national seminar at the constitution Club Lt.Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora warned all the concerned citizens of the country that the opportunistic politics of communalising absolutely non-communal issues will tear apart our social fabric and destroy Hindus and Sikhs alike along with the country. In making initial remarks at the beginning of the seminar Gen Aurora made bold departures from the conventional stances taken by political personages. Gen. Aurora said, "Terror is anti-thesis of a political approach and total nega-

tion of democracy. All democratic-minded people are agreed that in Punjab the basic problem is ever increasing terror and killing of innocent people. The question is what is providing support and sustaining this terror. There is a general belief that it is fundamentalism in Sikh religion. Let me say this as a Sikh, that there is not a single line that can be cited in favour of terrorism in the entire corpus of Sikh scriptures. What we have been witnessing for the last eight years is the total inability of all concerned to harness

the grand heritage of the Sikh faith against terror tactics. In this failure apart from weak and disparate Sikh leadership state controlled media and relatively autonomous print-media have vied with each other to promote hatred and communalism. What a sad commentary on our inability to play any constructive role!

Structurally terror rules the roost because democratic politics have been thrown off the rails. The only lasting solution to the menace of terror is strengthening of the democratic processes. But, here we have a

government which insists that democracy will return only after the complete eradication of terror. As a result the general population of the state suffers under the double meance of terror both by the AK 47 wielding terrorists and by the totally arbitrary executive power with the help of nearly 23 black laws.

"It is clear that imposition of emergency will not deter the terrorists. Emergency will give blanket power to the law enforcing agencies and innocent will suffer more. Emergency will spell an end of freedom in Punjab and

continued on page 4.

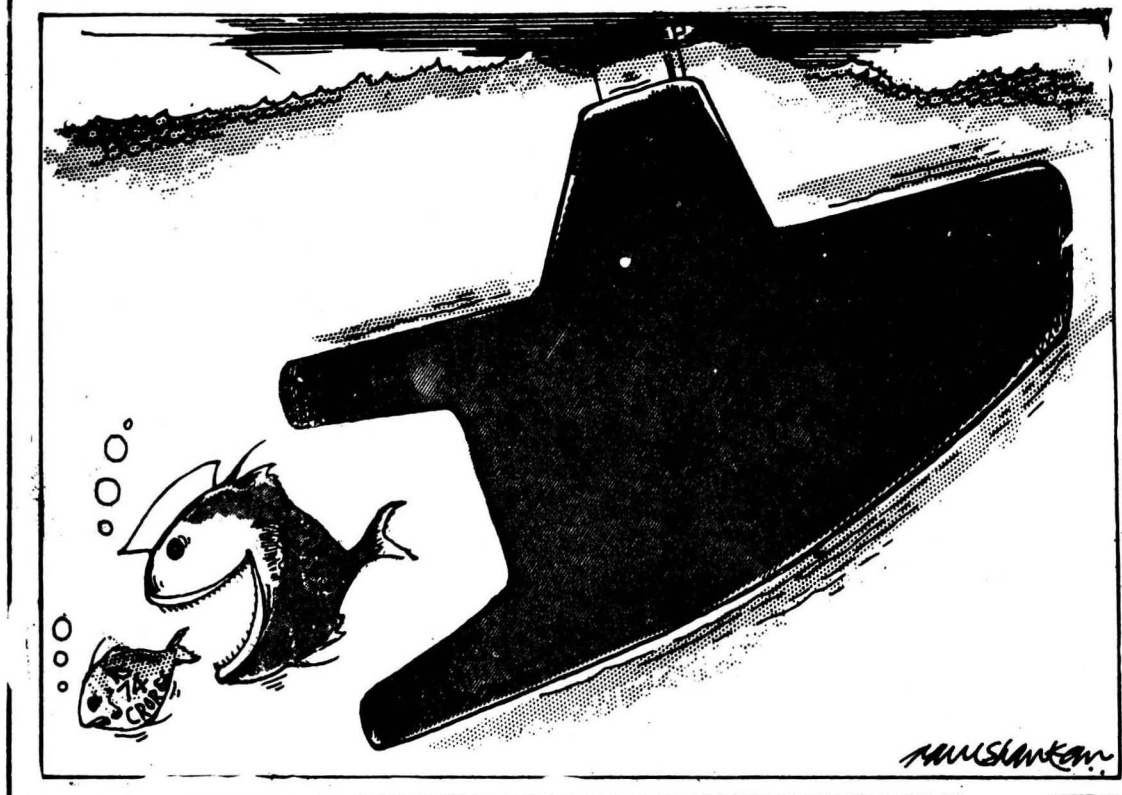
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Cartoons of the Fortnight



Indian - Express



Anish Shankar

Sound and Fury

It is now clear that the real facts of the Bofors case will come to light only when this government is no more.

- V.P. Singh, Jan Morcha leader

He (Rajiv Gandhi) knows about it. I know about it. All of us know who this person—the agent—is.

- Arun Nehru, Jan Morcha leader, on the alleged middleman in the HDW deal

Differences among Sikh leaders may be a cause of our weakness but it is also our greatest strength. And it is only because of our differences that the government could not bribe anyone and reach a settlement.

- Simranjit Singh Mann, Sikh extremist

After the treatment I got from the national selectors, I now wish Rajiv Gandhi was the sixth selector. At least I would have got justice.

- Raman Lamba, Test cricketer

I am demanding my own resignation.

- Ramakrishna Hegde, Karnataka chief minister

Which politician has no ambition in life?... No politician wants to be a sanyasin in this world... A person in public life who says he has no ambition in life is only fooling the people.

- H.D. Deve Gowda, dissident Karnataka Janata leader.

Parliamentary democracy is foreign ideology, socialism is foreign ideology, science and technology is foreign... He (Rajiv Gandhi) has studied abroad and talks to us (about the ills) of foreign ideology—it is ridiculous.

- E.M.S. Namboodiripad, CPI(M) general secretary

India is now a big power and can afford to look after its own interests. All the big powers including China, know India's strength and capability.

- S.H.F.J. Manekshaw, former chief of the armed forces.

China as a government will never give up Tibet... (so) I feel there is nothing wrong to negotiate some middle way.

- Dalai Lama, Tibetan religious leader.

With a man like Rajiv who has almost no political experience or any understanding of democratic institutions, it is nice to have Venkataraman as President.

- Arif Mohammad Khan in Probe.

You bastards. You liars. You'd prostitute your own mothers for this.

- Win Chadha to newsmen at Delhi airport

I have played tennis in every district in the Punjab

- Siddhartha Shankar Ray, governor of Punjab, on his attempts at getting close to the people, in Imprint

He (V.P. Singh) is a meek man. Also too careful

- Zail Singh quoted in The Statesman

We are prepared to go it alone.

- Jayalalitha, on the impending assembly election in Tamil Nadu, in Onlooker

Sati is the only way for a woman to prove she is pure.

- Niranjan Dev Teerth, Shankaracharya of Puri, in The Statesman Over the years, his (Shankaracharya's) importance has diminished and what is left will be demolished by people like me.

- Swami Agnivesh in The Sunday Observer

This is the way the service goes

- Kiran Bedi, on her transfer, in The Statesman

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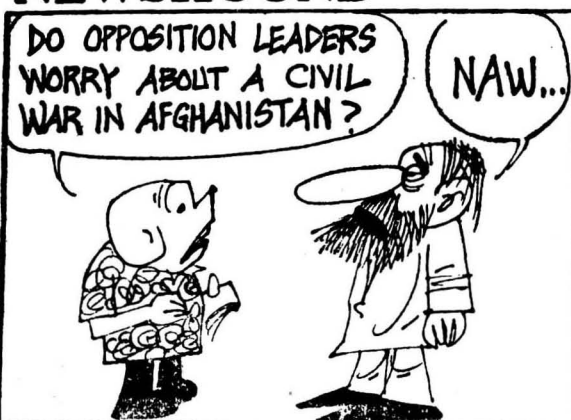
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By Rap



WHAT NEXT ?

Without question the security forces have had a marked success at Amritsar. They have gone about the job in a cautious and sophisticated manner. Obviously the mistakes of 1984 have been avoided and this is something which needs to be noted rather than passed over.

Even this time the rituals of daily worship have been disrupted; what is called the Maryada, for several days running, there has been no kirtan in the Golden Temple nor the several other things that accompany it. To blame only the authorities for this lapse would not be correct. Equally to blame are those who decide to convert the complex into a venue for confrontation.

Jasbir Singh Rode who took over as the head priest of the Akal Takht some weeks ago tried to correct the situation but he did not succeed. He took the view that the arms should not be brought into the complex nor should any kind of sanctuary be available for those who dodge the police. But his point of view was disregarded nor was it regarded as a policy directive even though he was in a position to issue such directive. This much must be conceded in all fairness and to pretend otherwise would be far from honest.

There is also a core of wisdom in what he advocated, if the security forces find that the Temple complex is being used in any manner for a purpose which attracts their attention, they are bound to intervene so to speak. What form that intervention would take would depend upon a number of factors. As stated above, the lesson of 1984 was learnt and no direct assault has been made. The strategy instead has been to tire out those who were in adverse occupation of the Temple complex.

Three further things however require to be said. While the lesson of 1984 has been learnt, they have been learnt only partially. This much has gone home, for instance that an attempt to intimidate a whole community does not work. On the contrary it leads to further resistance and even belligerence. People are prepared to recognise that in certain situations action has to be taken. But there has to be a sense of proportion about it and that is precisely the lesson that seems to have gone home. For instance, this time pilgrims were not only permitted to go out they were even enabled to do so. There has been no attempt to launch a general attack and involve the innocent along with the guilty and so on. This is moving in the right direction.

Secondly to assume that this would mean an end of terrorism would be too facile an assumption to make. While the Temple complex might be some kind of a sanctuary, it was by no means the headquarters of the terrorist activities that are taking place in the state. That activity would certainly be weakened because of the success that the security forces have achieved. Not only would their morale go up, they would also have more trained manpower available for this job. Though the Temple complex would be kept under observation, vigilance would not be as high as it has been all this time. Their capability to combat terrorism would certainly improve in consequence but terrorism will still continue to stalk the state for quite a while yet. This is because the Centre believes that administrative measures alone would take care of the problem.

This is evident, and that is the third point which is proposed to be made, from the intention to flush out the terrorists from the three border districts. The assumption seems to be that with the sanctuary of the Temple complex denied to them, the terrorists would have nowhere to hide and these combing operations would bring about the desired results. In a sense the whole operation would be similar to what was known as Operation Woodrose launched after Operation Bluestar.

Almost every youngman in the whole state and particularly in the border districts was then interrogated, sometimes arrested and so on. Consequently hundreds of youngmen chose to migrate to Pakistan and returned after several months in small batches. Quite a few of them had been trained and brainwashed during these visits. Furthermore fresh contacts had been established. For those who think that the experience this time can be different are deluding themselves. Those of them who can migrate to Pakistan will do so while others would move over to other parts of the state and even beyond the state in certain cases. Altogether what the Centre would have is qualified success but much greater resentment and hostility.

The plain fact is that in almost everything that the Centre does, it mishandles the situation. This derives from the fact that it is not prepared to face up to the basic situation which is to punish those who committed atrocities in 1984 at Amritsar, Delhi, and Kanpur and so many other places. It is not only as if the riots in Delhi are sought to be pushed under the rug. Even what was done in Punjab in June 1984 and a little later is sought to be handled similarly.

There is the notorious case of the Tiwana Inquiry commission. Almost three years have gone by and even though, after due process, individuals who had committed atrocities have been identified, no action has yet been taken. The Supreme Court which is seized of the matter has been informed by the State government that something is in the works. But the sheer fact of delay, and deliberate and wilful delay at that, has its own tale to tell. All those who do not have a closed mind on the subject have come to the conclusion that unless justice is done and this feeling is borne upon the common people vividly and powerfully, terrorism will continue to thrive. It will have its setbacks but it will not die out. To understand the meaning of what has been happening in Amritsar in any other light would amount to self-deception and little more.

Pakistan and the Punjab Problem

V. N. Naraynan

The Nation is at last being told, albeit in steady instalments, how deep has been the involvement of Pakistan in sustaining terrorism in Punjab and keeping the State on the boil. For those living close to Punjab the revelations by the Government in Parliament during the past fortnight are no surprise. For more than four years it is well-known that the Zia regime had been playing the benevolent host and patron to separatist and khalistani elements in a number of ways. It was an open secret that such well-known khalistani advocates as Jagjit Singh, Chaudhary and Ganga Singh Dhillon had been frequent visitors to Pakistan and they have always been honoured guests of Islamabad. As early as in 1984 the Government of India took up with President Zia the matter regarding the training camps being held in Pakistan for extremists who crossed the border from the Indian side of Punjab. It used to be said, not without substance, that much of the purely communal killings in Punjab since 1982 were the handiwork of persons, from across the border. This spectre largely remained true until terrorists started indiscriminate killings of entire families since early 1987.

Role of Smuggling

Role of smuggling in furthering violence in Punjab, is substantial considering that the smuggling across Indo-Pakistan border is multi-crore operation. It is only reasonable to assume that this phenomena became a major factor in encouraging militant violence in Punjab and keeping alive the khalistan campaign.

Surprise, if any about the Pak hand in the Punjab crisis is on two counts. First, if the Government of India had been aware all along about Islamabad's perfidious role, why it has not moved to plug the border, say two years ago? Apparently, India thought that it could cope with the terrorism within the state and also Pakistani assistance to khalistan strategists abroad. Realization has dawned now that neither has been achieved. The other surprise element is that the Zia regime which has so far been assumed to play the passive role of an onlooker in India's embarrassment across the border had actually been playing a diabolically dangerous game, active abetment in terrorism.

Weapons Galore

Four months ago intelligence agencies had reported about the

use of the deadly Chinese assault rifles AK-47 by terrorists in Punjab. It was put out that the total number of these weapons in the hands of the militants was around two hundred. Today it is being said that terrorists in Punjab might be having as many as fifteen hundred AK-47s. They have also equally deadly American weapons, AR-15 Rockets with launchers and even devastatingly effective Stringer Missiles. All these could not have been brought to India without the connivance and active participation of Pakistan. There is also evidence that a number of leaders of Pro-khalistan and Sikh Extremist Organizations in such far off countries as Britain, the USA and Canada go to Lahore to hold Sessions with Punjab extremists using the hitherto porous international border. It is also not a coincidence that many of the recent police encounters with terrorists have occurred very close to the Pak border.

Reasons Why?

It would be an oversimplification to attribute the escalation of Punjab crisis to Pakistan. Reasons why Pakistan has involved itself in this dangerous course of raising its stake in Punjab can only be speculated upon. As it happened, supply of sophisticated weapons, either sale or by gift, began around the time when Mr. J.F. Rebeiro's brave officers and men seemed to have gained the upper-hand in the fight against terrorism last November. May be President Zia felt that his tacit intervention was necessary to keep up morale of khalistani militants. Around this time it became clear that Soviet Union will be withdrawing its troops from Afghanistan. It is difficult to get what Pakistan's calculations are. May be, Islamabad is counting on engaging India in massive anti-terrorist battle in Punjab which might help postpone a constructive Afghan settlement or perhaps Pakistan

needs time to regroup its forces on the North-West front and the best bet was for it to strengthen separatist forces in Punjab and focus Indian attention only on internal situation.

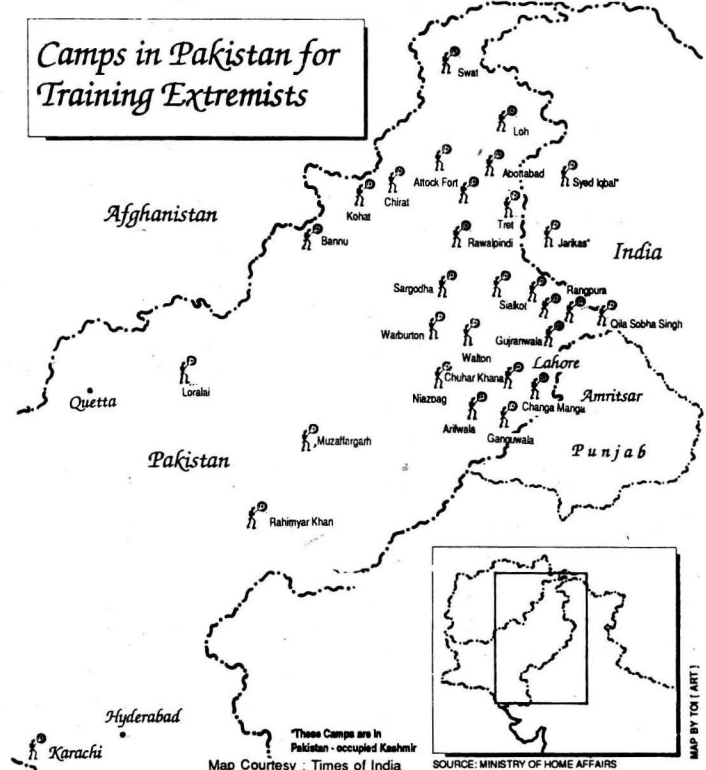
Terrorists Irreligious

In the current battle between security forces and armed militants in Punjab it is necessary to involve people of Punjab both Sikhs and Hindus. The nation has to be forcefully assured that terrorists have no religion and that they derive their strength not from people in Punjab but from the anti-India elements abroad. Sealing of the Punjab border, the prevention of smuggling and effective plugging of gaps through which traffic of men, arms and drugs flow between India and Pakistan are essential concomitants of the government's anti-terrorist strategy. As the Governor of Punjab Mr. Siddhartha Shankar Ray has repeatedly said that Punjab crisis today is not so much an internal revolt as an external aggression by proxy.

Recent government emphasis on the Pak factor is to show to the country as well as to the world that the majority of the Sikhs in Punjab are against the terrorists and only a small minority of anti-national elements are behind the violence and murders in Punjab. While there is no need to whip up hysteria over the Pak machinations, the mischievous neighbour in the North-West must be told that meddling in Punjab problem will be a dangerous game.

Aggressive intent of the Zia regime on Sialkot also indicates Pakistan's desires to prevent any prospect of normalisation of relations between the two countries even while evading direct confrontation. In the process, President Zia may be closing India options and provoke a fight of which the blame would entirely lie with him.

(Courtesy Air)



Communalism

continued from page 1

create a threat to democracy outside Punjab. It will indeed be a black day when emergency provisions are resorted to any where in India. That will be an admission of failure by the Indian people to protect their democratic institutions.

"In Punjab, imposition of emergency will provide a new kind of legitimacy to the militants. They will immediately convert it into an issue of freedom vs repression. Government of India has been pushing politics out of the centre stage and has thus been legitimising militancy. Imposition of emergency will provide legitimacy to militancy which can only further worsen an already desperate situation."

"Let me reaffirm that politics ends where terror begins and the Sikh faith does not sanction terror. If we are to survive as a free society politics of democracy must prevail. To do so the politics of democracy must prevail. To do so the political processes must be reactivated and strengthened. Steps should be taken to restore the confidence of Sikhs in Indian democracy and its justice. Justice is the soul of democracy. A free frank dialogue on problems underlying Punjab unrest must start at the earliest and on a national scale. A negotiated settlement worked out at the earliest with all those who swear by democracy will eventually marginalise terror and ultimately defeat it. There are no short cuts to get out of the present mess created by opportunist politicians. Punjab does

not need emergency, Punjab needs an open dialogue. It is a national problem. We have to activate right thinking people through out India.

"The politics of communalising absolutely non-communal issues will tear a part the social fabric and destroy Hindus and Sikhs alike, along with the country."

Sacred Harmandir

K.F. Rustamji emphasised that Harmandir is sacred not only for the Sikhs but also for the entire humanity. Any kind of sacrilege and disrespect is intolerable to us all-Sikhs, Parsees, Hindus, Muslims and Christians. He was concerned with the ongoing conflict at Amritsar. He made it clear that war-like postures by the Union government or the militants will not help the situation. Terror harms Sikhs as a people the most. Terror will ruin the state of Punjab. Neither an imposition of emergency is going to win over the hearts of people of Punjab. The only lasting solution is to do justice to Punjab and the Sikh people.

Rustamji told the people of country about the ominous rise of Hindu militancy. He said "it is a negative development" for the larger interests of the country. The state must function as a secular state and work a way out of the present day communalised conduct of its machinery.

1984 events are national shame and everything possible must be done to heal the wounds inflicted by the wrong steps taken

in the past. He said the constitution should be so amended that the minorities should be statutory protection against the violation of their rights at the hands of bigots and fanatics of all kinds and all affiliations.

Agony of Punjab

P. Tharyan of the Hindustan Times said, "The agony of Punjab has increased". Punjab's faith in the policies of the Union government is at the lowest ebb. All right thinking people are asking the question, Why the government is failing to win the confidence of the Sikh people and why can't we convince the people of Punjab about the justice of the entire country? He found the union government deficient and insensitive to the pulse of the people of the country. Government is dealing with Punjab problem on adhoc basis and a policy on Punjab is conspicuous by its absence. The Sikh leadership must come together and offer constructive proposal to the people of the country. In a democracy it is not necessary that all initiative should be left to the government. The people themselves should come forward in providing lead in complex matters.

The Emergency

K.L. Sharma general secretary of BJP pointed out that the move to impose emergency is the back-bone of "Rajiv Bachao" politics of the ruling party. His party still remembers the dark days of 1975 emergency rule. He said justice must be done. The criminals of 1984 must be punished. The innocent detainees released and political process restored. To make Punjab an election gambit is the worst kind of treachery to the country's interest. The real traitors are the opportunist politicians.

Bhabani Sengupta spoke of the fact that the decision-makers of today are the prisoners of the events of 1947. Sikhs must be assured of justice in India. Sikhs have made singular contribution to the strength and prosperity of the country. They are vital for its future. India belongs to us all. When the union government shouts about the interests of the country and yet does nothing to resolve Punjab crisis it deceives no body but itself.

Communist Politics

Arif Mohammad Khan tore apart the communalistic politics

created by opportunist politicians. Punjab does not need emergency, Punjab needs an open dialogue. It is a national problem. We have to activate right thinking people through out India.

of the contemporary politicians. He said it is a total reversal of the legacy of the freedom struggle. During the struggle for independence the people sacrificed so that we could enjoy freedom today and tomorrow. The rights of our people won through long drawn struggle must be protected against encroachment by the power hungry politicians anxious to fish power out of chaos.

P. Rosha one of the distinguished Panjabees to speak on the occasion warned the audience of the steps towards fascist and Latin American kind of polity in our country. We all have to stand up against these steps together if we have to have some chance of success.

B. G. Verghese showed deep concern for the massive killings going on in Punjab. He said steps to win the confidence of

the people of Punjab in the larger politics of the country are long over due. The guilty must be punished, the innocents released, and democracy nursed in Punjab.

Vijay Partap intervened to tell the audience about the negative features of the rising communal tide in the country. It must be resisted before it goes too far.

Dr N.L. Madan from Delhi University elaborated on the rise of arbitrary power in our midst. In the last forty years of independence we have created mini-dictators at every nook and corner. The rise of arbitrary power is quickly shaping itself into an effective pyramid. We all have to oppose it before it is too late. He was disgusted at the poor performance of the opposition in this regard.

1984 events are national shame and everything possible must be done to heal the wounds inflicted by the wrong steps taken in the past. He said the constitution should be so amended that the minorities should be statutory protected against the violation of their rights at the hands of bigots and fanatics of all kinds and all affiliations.



— Lt. Gen. J.S. Aurora —



K.L. Sharma



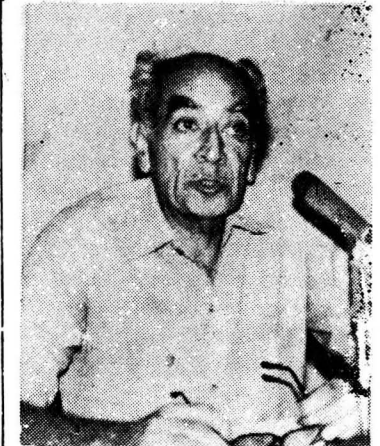
Arif Mohd. Khan



Amrik Singh



B.G. Verghese



Padam Rosha

One More Kill

All governments are oppressive. Governance is but a partial subrogation of the individual's autonomy for the collective good and collective interest. But, oftentimes, the government go to ridiculous, if not downright absurd, limits to curb the individual's autonomy including his urgent explore and learn.

A scholarly Gujarati journal Arhat, a quarterly, is now the victim of the state's mindlessness. And for what? An article, 'Sectarian Literature and Social Consciousness: A Study of the Swaminarayan Sect 1800-1840' by Prof Makrand Mehta, Head of the Deptt of History at the Gujarat University, Ahmedabad, published by the journal in its October-December 1986 issue, has been found to be objectionable now by the Gujarat Govt. The Govt has permitted the prosecution of Prof Mehta, the author, under Sec 196 of the CPC. And the Editors of Arhat — Ghanashyam Shah and Achyut Yagnik are also to be prosecuted along with Prof Makrand Mehta in the court of the chief Judicial Magistrate, Baroda.

Without wanting to comment upon the merits of the case, which is sub-judice, and without wanting to influence the court's opinion in any way, we wish to assert that if this is going to be the pattern of state's conduct, no serious and scholarly inquiry will ever be possible. The action has dangerous implications for academic freedom and freedom of expression.

In the recent past, the country has witnessed an unseemly controversy over Ambedkar's 'Riddless of Hindusim' in Maharashtra instigated and abetted by Shiv Sena, among others. Somehow, the situation was saved and the controversial chapters of Ambedkar deleted. The fundamentalists were appeased and peace was 'bought'. But, is this the way the secular state should run? More recently, Mr G S Arora, a UNI correspondent from Amritsar, has been arrested under NSA.

It is possible and probable that the article in Arhat may have offended the religious sentiments of some in Gujarat. But, was it deliberate? Could it not be that Prof Makrand Mehta was interested only in examining the issue from the point of view of a scholar than a sectarian man? What interest could he have had in intentionally hurting the sentiments of one particular community? All these and many more issues may be examined by the court of law. But, the damage to the spirit of intellectual inquiry has been done one way or the other. As it is we, in India, do not have many scholars with conviction who are willing to march ahead regardless of the consequences, this is how a discipline grows. But most of the scholars yield to the pressures of their times, regimes of the day. This particular action of the Govt of Gujarat has dealt one major blow to the pursuit of legitimate knowledge. It is aimed at intimidating dissenters.

Prof Makrand Mehta is no ordinary fellow. He is the President of Gujarat Association of History. An Adviser to the Govt of Gujarat on archives. He presided the Modern India Section of the last Indian History Congress. This article was in the form of a research paper presented by Prof Mehta in a seminar on 'Literature & Changing Social consciousness in Western India' organised by the Centre for Social Studies at Surat. Prof Ghanasham Shah one of the editors of Arhat and a co-accused in the case, is the Director of the Centre. Must these scholars be treated this way by the State? Don't they have better use for their scholarship?

One may disagree with Prof Mehta. One may reject all of his work as sub-standard. But, no one in his sane mind will say that he be prosecuted for telling his side of truth as perceived by him. He is entitled to his views as much as the protagonists of Swaminarayan sect are. After all, it was only on the basis of rejection of the 'old' that the foundations of the 'new' were laid. Swami Dayanad Saraswati rejected the 'old' in Hinduism and Arya Samaj was born. Guru Nanak disowned the dogmas of his day and was persecuted. But, will the end of the 20th century also see the revival of the mediaeval notions? Must Jesus be crossed in all ages?

It is time some sanity prevailed in Gujarat in the highest echelons of bureaucracy and the mindless step be withdrawn before it becomes a national catastrophe. After all, there have been no major riots after the article appeared in Arhat. And, then, how many serious Gujarati (or language) journals we have in the country? Why stifle one that is alive and kicking?

(From Universtly Today)

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Battle for Amrtisar

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a recent statement that there were strong human and religious sentiments involved. The General warned that another entry into the complex was bound to have far-reaching effects. He regretted that there seemed to be a conspiracy to destroy every emerging leader of the Sikh community and urged the Sikh leaders to unite to save the community from further harassment and humiliation.

U.A.D.

One can justify the recent arrest of the United Akali Dal leaders, including Mr. Parkash-Singh Badal and Mr. Sukhjinder Singh, but there cannot be a sadder commentary on the present situation than the fact that even Mr. Surjit Singh Barnala, former Chief Minister of Punjab and leader of the Akali Dal (L), who stuck his neck out for the nation by ordering the police into the Golden Temple, was compelled to court arrest to protest against the siege of the holy shrine. The position of the nationalist Sikhs is like that of the nationalist Muslims before 1947. They are not Sikhs according to the fundamentalists and leaders like Mr. Barnala have been excommunicated from the panth and in the eyes of the Hindus they are suspects.

Role of Sikhs

It is often said by the government and some leading media men of the country that the Sikhs themselves are to blame for the tragedy. They accuse the Sikhs, particularly the intelligentsia, of having lurking sympathy for the terrorists or being neutral. They also say that it is for the Sikhs to restore the sanctity of the Golden Temple. But the accusers do not spell out how should the Sikhs fight terrorists and restore the sanctity. Should they take up arms against the terrorists? Who will provide them the arms and the training? Supposing they are given arms and licences and the necessary training, how will they succeed when the highly trained para-military forces with better weaponry has not succeeded in rooting out terrorism. There is a fundamental flaw in this argument. Punjab terrorism is not a Sikh problem alone. It is a national problem and the nation must carry the Sikhs with them by owning them as co-nationals.

There cannot be a more bitter critic of the terrorists than the CPM leader, Mr. Harkishen Singh Surjeet, but he too told the Chandigarh Press Club a few days ago that administrative action alone would not solve the problem. He expressed the view that before initiating action in the Golden Temple, the government should have asked the Sikh high priests, the SGPC and both

wings of the Akali Dal to intervene in fighting out terrorists from the temple. He regretted that there is no political initiative from the government to solve the problem. There cannot be a stronger hardliner than the CPI leader, Mr. Satpal Dang, but he too has demanded action against the guilty of the Delhi massacre of Sikhs in Delhi in 1984, release of the innocent Jodhpur detainees and rehabilitation of Army deserters who acted under emotional stress. Mr. Surjeet Singh said that it was a matter of shame for the government that not a single person guilty of the Delhi killings had been punished so far. He also said that if the government could release the four priests, who had openly declared their support for Khalistan from the Golden Temple, what prevented the government from releasing the Jodhpur detainees who are in jail for the last four years without trial.

Irrelevant Akalis

The Centre has systematically made both the factions of the Akali Dal and the SGPC irrelevant, thus destroying the much needed political buffer. One can understand attempts to destroy the Akali Dals as it is the single largest Opposition party in Punjab capable of forming government but the attempt to make the SGPC irrelevant is not understandable. How can the SGPC, though charged with maintaining the sanctity of the Golden Temple, restore the 'maryada' when the government itself has made it irrelevant and does not want it to function.

One example will suffice. Elections for the President and other office bearers of the SGPC were held in October last. Two rival sets of office bearers were elected by rival Akali Dals. Now the SGPC was created under the Gurdwara Act of 1925 and under it the government has to notify the result of elections. Under the Act, the government has the power to make an inquiry into the rival claims and announce and notify the results. So far it has not done so. Legally, the SGPC is without a president and other office bearers. But what has the government done? It released Mr. Jasbir Singh Rode, an alleged terrorist, and "legitimised" his appointment as the Akal Takht chief by the Sarbat Khalsa in April last. Like Prof. Darshan Singh Ragl, he too has been made irrelevant.

The Akali leaders are accused of ambivalence and neutrality and not coming out openly against the terrorists. But what can the Akali leaders, or for that matter the Sikh leaders, do when the government has given the impression that it wants to deal with terrorists only. The situation

became so bad a few months ago that even the security forces had become demoralised and they were reluctant to act against the terrorists under the impression that tomorrow they might become their rulers. Anyway the present action has boosted the morale of the security forces like anything but with it goes the danger to highhandedness by them, armed as they are with draconian powers of arrest without warrants and torturing suspects with impunity. The Akalis ambivalence can be attributed to their mistrust of the government's real intentions, whether it wants to solve the problem or win the next elections by playing its 'Sikh terrorist card.'

Complex Problem

History, it seems, will repeat itself. The government claims that it will rid the Golden Temple of terrorists and it should. The government's desire to restore the 'maryada' of the shrine is very laudable. But the situation is not that simple as made out to be. The temple was rid of terrorists in June 1984. But for a long time the 'maryada' of the shrine was not restored as no granthi was willing to perform the rituals.

Even now no granthi is willing to go inside the temple. After the rituals were restored in 1984, terrorists again sneaked in. It is not clear how the government will prevent terrorists going in again in the garb of devotees. How will it force the SGPC, without proper office bearers legally speaking, to perform its tasks or will the government hold fresh elections to the SGPC due since 1984?

There is one significant difference between the situation now and that obtaining in 1984. At that time the terrorists were confined to the Golden Temple only and it was easier to deal with them. Now, according to informed sources, they are spread over Haryana, Delhi and other places. They have now more open support from Pakistan who is waging a war by "proxy" against India. The terrorists struck at a marriage party near Panipat recently killing 14 persons. On the night of May 16 they killed 45 persons and on the night of May 17 they killed 36 persons and injured many others. According to one source, the terrorists have a three-tier ring now. One inside the Golden Temple, the other in the villages around it and the third beyond the villages. The Union Home Minister, Mr. Buta Singh, recently gave the impression to Punjab M.P.s. that they would also flush out terrorists from Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Ferozepur districts. This reminded General Aurora of Operation Woodrose after Blue-star Operation and warned the government that it would be counterproductive like the other one.

Even if the government succeeds in rooting out terrorists, at best it will be a Sycratic victory with no other policy to salvage the situation. Nowhere in the world terrorism has been wiped out successfully without the political input. (18 May 1988)

More Youngsters Hooked to Drugs

Mamta Mehta

When experts from the Narcotic Intelligence Branch found that the plant that grows abundantly in a corner of the Delhi University campus is cannabis popularly known as 'Ganja' it was the police which got shocked. Thousands of students, teachers and other officials had seen this plant growing in some areas of the University Campus but never thought that such a daring cultivation will happen inside the campus.

But it happened. Narcotics like smack, heroin, cocaine, hashish and crude thing ganja rules many cities of the country. From Kashmir Valley to Kovalam beach a large number of tourists and students are slaves of the drug menace.

Tourist Centres

Many of our tourist centres are used by foreign drug agents as exchange places. For example, in Goa and in Kovalam a lot of tourists are selling foreign drugs which reach the University campuses and other retail outlets through local agents.

United States is considered as the biggest market for drugs in the world where narcotics from exclusive Cocoa island in South



Drug addicts in Bombay: cause for concern

America is air-lifted through air strips in the deep jungles using small single engine aircrafts. These mafia groups that are engaged in drug trafficking are so dangerous gangs that the U S Drug Enforcement agencies find it difficult to curb this business.

In India, Bombay is the centre of drug trade with international outlets. West Asian and Far Eastern heroin bond for Europe

and the USA passes through Bombay. Narcotics from the Chaitral hills of Pakistan comes this way while drug from Thailand, Burma and Cambodia passes through Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Sri Lanka.

Transit Point

New Delhi is also a transit point for narcotics from Pakistan and the North

east during its journey to Western countries. Certain points on the Indo-Pak border are known for their continued connection with drug Trafficking.

In 1985 the Central Government brought into force the narcotic drugs and Psychotropic Substance Act. Under this Act stringent punishment have been provided for drug trafficking and Indian agents are in touch with their counterparts in the USA, UK etc. Bilateral cooperation between India and its neighbouring countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Burma, Sri Lanka etc, are also in progress.

The liberalised reward scheme under which officials or informants including those of State drug law enforcement departments are entitled for awards after seizure of drugs, has boosted the anti-drug activities.

Mandrax tablets are very popular among college students.

In Madhya Pradesh, authorities raided two places to seize 13.7 kgs of cocaine and the rest of the seizures was mainly from Maharashtra.

Thus Maharashtra seems to be the nerve centre of drug business in India. The westernized city of Bombay and the presence of foreign pleasure seekers at Pune where the Rajaneesh ashram is situated, make the sit-

uation worse.

According to statistics the number of drug addicts is increasing every year. In the clinic for drug addicts at G B Pant Hospital in Delhi the number of patients were 193 in 1980. But it rose to 821 in 1984 showing a big increase. Female patients are also included in this number. From the 18 cases booked, more than 1,483 kgs, of this dreaded drug was seized, of which the main catch of 1,101 kgs, was from Maharashtra and the rest from Punjab.

It seems that Bihar is the main area of Ganja cultivation in India. According to a statement given in the Lok Sabha, 50,404.9 kgs of Ganja was seized from Bihar in 1986 which comes to 87% of the total. 100 raids were conducted for this.

Like this 64.57% of the total heroin seized was from Maharashtra. 67 raids were conducted for this catch.

Maharashtra proved to be number one in the trade of morphine also. Through 28 raids 113.24 kgs of morphine was sized in that State. In the case of charas also 36 raids in Maharashtra gave 56% of the total seizure in the country. It comes to 11,302.76 kgs.

Media Watch

What is the national interest?

On 24 April The Indian Post from Bombay published a story about suspected RAW's involvement in supply of Arms to Punjab. It was expected that press will made a serious issue of it. However not only press did not take a serious note of it but when specifically asked to do so by the author, of the story Mr. Dhiren Bhagat turned it down on the grounds of "the National Interest". The author Mr. Bhagat in write up in Sunday informs about the attitude of the press and members of Parliament towards truth in this specific case. Reproduced here is that write up. For the information of readers and make their own inferences.

The facts are simple enough: on 24 April The Observer, London and The Indian Post, Bombay published a story crammed with details about a RAW operation that went wrong. It was no ordinary operation. RAW was smuggling from Kabul caches of arms including rocket launchers when a small slip occurred. It was the sort of slip that journalism thrives on.

On Thursday 19 November last year at New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport a few stray bullets rolled into the apron out of a crate that had just come in from Kabul on Indian Airlines flight IC 452. An alert securityman spotted the bullets

and informed his superiors. Within minutes R.K. Neogi, DCP Palam was on the scene. The crate belonged to a consignment of 22 crates; each of these crates was isolated and an X-ray examination commenced as both customs and police were convinced that they had hit upon a major haul of terrorist contraband.

The examination revealed more than just bullets. According to my information—an eyewitness—there was at least one rocket launcher in the crates that were examined.

A dispute began between the customs men and the securitymen each claiming credit for the haul. As appreciation letters

were being written out, someone in civvies came in and identified himself to Neogi as a RAW operative. He claimed the crates contained government property and whisked them away before Neogi's men could open them and make an inventory of the contents. According to the Freight Delivery Register, these crates were collected from the cargo warehouse on 20 November.

The crates bore two addresses. The sender's address was given as: Director General Communications Pul-e-Bag, Hea Amooni, Kabul.

The consignment was addressed to: Director General Communications Sanchar Bhawan New Delhi.

Sanchar Bhawan is the building which houses the ministry of communications but a quick check with the ministry reveals that there is no such position as director general in the ministry, yet the Airway Bill Number 058 3035 4273 records the contents of the 22 crates as being 'telecom equipment' and clearly

states that the addressee was the 'director general'.

When the details of this episode became known to me, I contacted B.G. Deshmukh, the cabinet secretary and asked for an explanation. Deshmukh is the official RAW is supposed to report to; even so I did not expect an immediate response so I gave him 24 hours in which to furnish an explanation. The next day when I called Mr Deshmukh said he had been unable to "get a final reply from that organisation". He said he could not ask me to hold my story as he was unable to confirm or deny it.

After I filed the story for the two newspapers for whom I write I went away to Bombay on an extended weekend. To be honest I thought the matter would be picked up in Parliament and would most likely feature in the debate on the home ministry in the Rajya Sabha. I also thought our free press would pick up the story.

I was wrong. Nothing appeared. Nothing happened. No questions were asked, no tempers ruffled. On Wednesday I decided to do the rounds. I began in the morning with Opposition MPs who I thought would

be interested in the story. With one exception none of the people I called on, really seemed to know much about the story. I may be wrong about this but with that same exception none of the MPs I called upon, seemed especially enthusiastic about it.

One MP, a senior parliamentarian, seemed especially concerned about his "political career". He kept saying, "One story like this and my entire career could be ruined. I will have to corroborate the details of this story first."

I appreciated the MP's desire to corroborate the details of the story and offered my services to that end, an offer that was not taken up. I came away with a sinking heart. The same MP had been quick to raise my last story—on the disclosure in Parliament and ask questions about it. Had he once tried to "corroborate" with me whether or not Mr J.N. Dixit and the LTTE had admitted to the Rs. 50 lakh payment the government had made to the Tigers last August before raising the matter in Parliament?

The exception was Lt. Gen Aurora who had read the story in The Indian Post and had already, so he informed me, requested a special mention in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday. Later in the day I was reassured by Mr Subramaniam Swamy's enthusiasm but till then I felt it was just possible

Cont. on page 13

Wither India, My Country

By Bhagwant Singh
Dalawari

In my own country I am being put on public trial; in my own country I am considered a traitor, at best a suspected terrorist, at worst, a secessionist. There was a time when everyone in any part of the country thought of me as a potential soldier, dependable friend and unfailing helper in distress. Today even when I quote Guru Gobind Singh's direction to me to treat the entire human race as of my own caste. I remain a suspect. Guru Granth Sahib vehemently insists that I love all human beings and gives me lessons not only in theory but in the voice of a Kabir, a Namdev, a Farid, a Ravidas, a Jaidev and other non-Sikh Bhaktas, practical direction to consider all Truth as my own. And, God knows, I try my best to live upto the dictates of my Gurus. In my present world, I sit at the feet of leprosy patients, who are all non-Sikhs and yet, all of them are my brothers, sisters, children. And the old ones like my parents. And yet, Bal Thackeray asks for my boycott, holds me to ransom and humiliates me publicly. Why?

Because there are extremists, terrorists who happen to be Sikhs? Are there no extremists, terrorists in Bengal, Assam, Andhra and elsewhere? Are there no terrorists among Hindus or Muslims or Christians. But all Christians, all Hindus, all Muslims are not treated as traitors or terrorists. Why?

Emergency

Because Sikhs resisted Emergency and Indira Gandhi was enraged? So many other distinguished citizens of India did the same and held the flag of democracy aloft. Because Bhindranwale's histrionics were unbearable? But who created Bhindranwale and then most of us were not with Bhindranwale. In fact many of us publicly condemned his activities. Because of Operation Bluestar? But it's Government's business to deal with anti-national elements. Why am I being harassed? I am neither anti-national nor unpatriotic, nor indeed silent over the mad acts of killing of innocent people in Punjab. I condemn them vociferously. Indeed every Hindu does not condemn Hindu criminals, every Muslim does not do the same in respect of Muslim hoodlums. Why, particularly, why, I am made butt of ridicule?

Because those who killed Indira Gandhi were Sikhs.

Because there are extremeists, terrorists who happen to be Sikhs? Are there no extremists, terrorists in Bengal, Assam, Andhra and elsewhere? Are there no terrorists among Hindus or Muslims or Christians. But all Christians, all Hindus, all Muslims are not treated as traitors or terrorists. Why?

Surely not all Brahmins, not all Hindus or others were not so treated because someone killed Mahatma Gandhi. Again, is it not enough that for 3 days of November all the citizens of my kind were considered for being burnt alive, for being made to pay for one murder in an organised massacre? Don't my countrymen realise that the Central Government is still engaged in sheltering those criminals. Leave aside all Hindus, even the criminals themselves go scot free. And, yet, why am I being paraded as a criminal.

A Sikh Glory

There was time when 1948, 1965, 1971 wars were proudly metioned for Sikh glory. When Sikh hymns were circulated for creating religious-cum-patriotic fervour among the forces and ordinary Sikh citizens. In the fields in the Punjab, ordinary Sikh men and women patriotically fed and encouraged the Jawans engaged in war with Pakistanis. All of a sudden, why all Sikhs have become suspect? Why?

Because terrorists kill innocents in Punjab? Indeed they kill Sikhs as well. Why doesn't the Nation sympathise with my agony as well? Why doesn't the Nation understand that it is the Central Government which has made the Sikh youth so mad that they have lost their mind in the belief that they would never get justice from the rulers. The whole world pleads for release or trial of the Jodhpur detenus - but the Central Government waits for a bargain. If it belatedly comes out with the release of 40 of them, they threaten Emergency and suspension of right to live. The world expects of any civilised Government to punish the criminals of Nov 1984, but the Government is adamant in shielding them.

State and Government

My countrymen, I am disillusioned but I am not frustrated. In any case I know the present Central Government is not INDIA. The Government, with its Bofors and submarine connections, with its Festivals and Bachan Brothers, with Lakshadweep and saraska escapades, will definitely go but



Because POWER is more important than uniting the hearts of people of the country. My lament is: what will you do with forced geographical and map-integrity if you are tearing all hearts that really unite a people?

Oh, the people of India, beware! Those who loudly talk of unity and integrity of India in the chairs of power are themselves engaged in destroying it. If the army's onslaught on the Golden Temple led to the alienation of sikhs and Nov. 84 massacres created an urge for Khalistan in the microscopic minority. I understand that distinguished citizens came out at personal risk in compiling reports of atrocities and in healing wounds at personal levels. Continued illtreatment of the vast majority of the Sikhs in and out of Punjab a la Bal Thackeray along with Emergency in Punjab will bring the process of NO RETURN to normalcy. Do we want it? If not, allow me to live peacefully as an honoured citizen of my country for which I have certainly more LOVE and RESPECT than Prime Minister of India!

My COUNTRY will remain and I shall be steadfast in maintaining its unity and integrity not because Bal Thackeray threatens me but because I believe Khalistan is an aberration. Indeed the criminal actions must be punished but let police not commit illegal acts to perpetuate the supply of terrorists. Again, the question remains that with all my thinking in line with any other

responsible citizens of the country, why is my turban and beard singled out for giving me a label of a terrorist, a suspect, a traitor? Why?

Because it suits the Central Government to divided Hindus and Sikhs of Punjab the still refuse to fight each other? Because it suits the vote-catching opportunists to communalise the situation?

Because it suits the Central Government to divide Hindus and Sikhs of Punjab the still refuse to fight each other? Because it suits the vote-catching opportunists to communalise the situation? Because POWER is more important than uniting the hearts of people of the country. My lament is: what will you do with forced geographical and map-integrity if you are tearing all hearts that really unite a people?

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Trying to summarise a seminar on Punjab! Impossible. Yet it is worth trying. The last sentence articulates the feeling uppermost in my mind in preparing this report on a National Seminar on Punjab held at Satyavati Co-educational College, University of Delhi. Javed, a keen scholar and humanist got his idea of a national discussion on Punjab clothed into action as soon as the University Grants Commission agreed to fund his programme.

The Seminar turned out to be a marathon programme. Two full days-9.30 A.M. to 6.30 P.M. sessions with national ranking public-men and scholars. The participants included H.N. Bahuguna, Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Jagjit Singh Aurora, Harkrishan Singh Surjeet, P.K. Bansal, Inder Kumar Gujral, Rajinder Sachar, Avtar Singh Malhotra, C.P. Bhambari, Amrik Singh, Satya Mehta Rai, Badri Raina, Chandan Mitra, Ajit Kaur, Ramji Lal, and Shailender Saxena among others. With this quantity and quality of earnest research invested it becomes a near impossible task to report it objectively and adequately in one account. Yet it is worth trying.

The learned dissertations of seminarians inevitably had number of facts for each paper. Every paper had historical, theoretical, structural-analytical and resolute dimensions. These dimensions encased one unified argument. In spite of this unity the gravamen of the papers permit an arrangement along the following lines. First there were the speeches of leaders, the second the papers essentially focused on the historical dimension of the Punjab Problem, third, the paper opting for theoretical and structural analysis, fourth, the papers outlined the way to the solution of the problem, and last but not the least were the papers having terror-teasing as their principal interest.

Popular leaders Speak

The prominent leaders who participated in the seminar included among others Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Jagjit Singh Aurora, Inder Kumar Gujral, Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna, Harkrishan Singh Surjeet and Avtar Singh Malhotra.

The leaders with minor variations found the central government as the principal culprit in perpetuating the Punjab problem. Gen. Aurora reminded the audience of the promises and assurances given the Sikh people at the time of the partition of the country in 1947. The then national leadership assured that the Sikhs as people will enjoy a life of freedom, dignity and honour in republican India. Now if some difference arise about the fulfillment of these promises the central government has no business to resort to black laws and draconian measures. Nor have

the opposition side a right to resort to the gun. The matter is political and democratically negotiable. So long as this democratic resolution is not adopted by all the concerned parties we shall not emerge out of the dark tunnel in which we all find ourselves when we look at Punjab. The people are being mauled by the double repression of the state on one hand and the presence of terror on the other. The prolongation of this double grind is tormenting for the entire democratic consciousness of the country. Punjab therefore, is not a provincial affair. It is a national problem and must be resolved with a powerful national consensus. General Aurora concluded with the hope that this national consensus will emerge sooner than later.

H.N. Bahuguna laid the blame squarely on the wily power politics played by the ruling party in general and the ruling dynasty in particular. He exposed the opportunistic machinations of the ruling party aiming at the ruination of the state and the country but the perpetuation of the hold of the ruling dynasty.

Gujral recounted how the Sikh movement brought new life to northern parts of India in the seventeenth and the eighteenth century. He also exposed the motivated dithering of the powers that be at the centre to the detriment of Punjab and communal harmony. He did not mince words when he probed into the failure of the Akalis to provide stability to the state of Punjab. He reiterated his faith in the democratic resolution of the Punjab problem.

Surjeet and Malhotra approached the problem from a Leftist angle. Both castigated the bourgeoisie for fomenting communalism in order to entrench itself in power and prolong its hold on the collective consciousness of the Panjabees. So long as the people do not tear apart this conditioning they will continue to suffer at the hands of one group of rascals or the other. The longer way out is people's politics at the expense of the politics of politicians.

As outstanding contribution

Badri Raina's paper Religion and Politics in India; the dominance of the Feudal Episteme was a contribution class apart from the rest. Raina opted for a philosophical analysis of the nexus between religion and politics in India. He argued that communalism and fundamentalism are no chance occurrences. Nor are they of the nature of a planned fraud on the people. They represent a thrall-dom not easily understood by the victims and the observers alike. He argued that abuse of religion by politics is the outcome of a certain kind of Episteme. He names it the Feudal Episteme. It

will become more understandable if we term it as the pre modern outlook. Raina equates rational thinking with scientific and secular thinking. He makes a comprehensive survey of Indian philosophical tradition to bring out his point. Since it is not possible to represent his position in this wider report we will bring Raina's paper to the readers in the forthcoming issue of the Forum Gazette

Historical Analysis

Ajit Javed, R. Mannivanan, Amrik Singh, Ramji Lal and Devender Swarup brought out the historical depth of the problem afflicting Punjab in the eighties. Some excerpts:

After meticulously tracing the evolution of Punjab politics for the last seven decades. Ajit Javed summed up the recent times as under: "Continuance of the pre-independence policies in Punjab by the Congress has further contributed to the rise of communal and fundamental forces. Though Punjab has the highest per capita income in the country, it lags behind in industrial sphere. The lack of heavy industry had also produced the problem of unemployment of educated and trained youth who has become a victim of communal and fundamentalist ideology. In the urban areas the trading castes among the Sikhs operate at the lower level as compared with the Hindu counterpart. They find in religious symbols and easy way of defending their economic interests.

Like the Congress the Akali politics too is characterised by opportunistic manoeuvres aimed at quick capturing political power. For this, Akali Party uses religion appeals and slogans which are bound to keep away the other community and produce communal bickering and communal tension. Akali Party in power and out of power has been playing quite different roles, when it formed ministry in 1967 and 1969, the whole atmosphere was different but when removed from power in 1971 it adopted the Anandpur Sahib Resolution in 1973. After the Emergency when it again won elections in state it did not take up the issue of Anandpur Sahib Resolution but when again it lost power in 1981, it launched 'Dharam Yudh' to force the Central Govt. to concede the demands of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution.

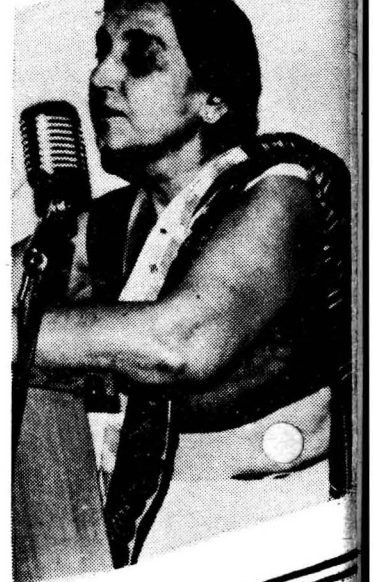
It was in this situation that Bhindranwale emerged and brought religious fundamentalism to the force. The Akali leaders used Bhindranwale extremists posture as the pressure tactic on the Congress. Congress in turn projected Bhindranwale to use him against the Akalis. Thus Akalis and Congress politics using him made him very important on the political

scene in Punjab.

In a similar kind of paper Ramji Lal concluded "The Sikhs separatism is a colonial legacy and the British government tried its level best to create a schism among the Sikhs as well as the Hindus. It patronised and favoured the recruitment of the Sikhs in the military and other branches of the government. Despite this, the Sikhs have been at the forefront in the National movement too. Though Sikhs

could not be materialized. The Sikh leadership decided to link their fate with India and the Sikhs have made great contribution in all walks of life in the post-Independent India.

Since the Sikhs are a religious minority in India, therefore, they want to keep a separate identity. For Sikhs, there is no difference between



National Seminar on Punjab



were encouraged by the British government and its bureaucrats to press for the separate home land. But the idea was vague, therefore, it

the religion and politics. Therefore, to achieve the political ends, the religious slogans "Panth is danger" and the like are raised. As a result, the communalism, has penetrated in all walks of life. The minority communalism is more aggressive, and violent. The

present Punjab Scenario is the result of the same. The killing of innocent people, transmigration of the people, arson, loot, bloodshed and erosion of the Punjabi culture and oneness of the Hindus and the



minar

b G.S. Sandhu



Sikhs are some of the dangerous pointers. The fear psycho which haunts the minority community in Punjab and the Sikhs outside Punjab is creating a great void. Though the Sikhs are not discriminated, yet there are certain imaginary as well as real grievances. The Government should take a political initiative to resolve those grievances.

The first step in this direction is to punish all those cul-

prits who indulged in the November riots (1984). Secondly, the boundary dispute and river water dispute between Haryana and Punjab should be resolved without further delay.

Thirdly, the ideology of the communalism must be encountered and the masses must be educated about the secular ethos.

Fourth, though the terrorist and anti-social elements should be dealt with severely, yet 'bullet for bullet' is not a permanent solution. Rather, the Government should open a dialogue with all the factions of the Sikhs.

Fifth, the Sikh leadership should openly condemn the violence and bloodshed carried out in the name of a by the terrorists.

Yet another historical analysis by Devender Swarup traced the evolution of Akali demands to 1947 days. He writes, "Without apportioning blame on any side, we may safely conclude from the few extracts given above that immediately after partition the Akali mind had started working in the direction of the creation of a Sikh Homeland under the grab of its demand for a linguistic state and consequently the whole political atmosphere of the Punjab was full of communal distrust and bitterness. The unfortunate and misguided reaction of a section of the Punjabi Hindus in rejecting their mother tongue in the 1951 census ought to be seen in this background. It was not the starting point, as is being projected by the Akali publicists, rather a desperate, though political wrong and unwise reaction to the separatist designs of a section of the Akali leadership and was actuated by a patriotic urge to avoid the catastrophe of a second partition of the motherland.

Journey from 1971 to Anandpur Sahib Resolution of 1973 was just a step ahead. As already stated, the continuous expansion of its demands has been a compulsion for Akali Dal's theocratic politics in a secular political system. Besides competition with secular parties, internal power struggle, personal rivalries and groupism within the Akali Dal and the S.G.P.C. have also contributed to the adoption of extreme postures. With its symbiotic relationship the Akali Dal has been treating the Sikh population as its only vote bank which could lead it to power.

R. Mani Varman exposes the contribution of communal and opportunistic politics in the following passage:

The failure of the Union Government to honour its commitments made in the Punjab Accord had only eroded the credibility of the elected Akali Dal (L) government. The imposition of President's rule in Punjab by displacing the popularly elected Barnala government had only aggravated the hiatus, in

the centre-state relationship, between the Punjab and the Union Government. The notion of federalism that is prevailing in the mind of our ruling elites in India is itself colonial in nature because of its insistence on administrative federalism rather than a political one.

The Indian Government is busy fighting terrorism through an extraordinary administrative and constitutional powers as though the Punjab crisis is a law and order problem. The suspension of the democratic political process in Punjab and the adoption of black laws to tackle the situation has become a continuous course in the centres handling of the Punjab situation. The enactment of the 59th amendment necessitates few questions as this bill would only worsen the political atmosphere against the new hope that was building up after the first release of the Jodhpur detainees. Can the Centre achieve its goal of bringing peace by keeping the people of Punjab constantly under the Centre's rule? Since the continuous rule of the centre would not simply entail intrusion in the domain of the States but would result in a sense in semi-colonial status because of the absence of popular rule. Can a Governor remain a link in the Parliamentary democracy in a situation of administrative state and in the federal policy itself without becoming a deputy or an agent of the centre? The challenges faced by the Indian government over the Punjab crisis would remain the same or worsen so long as the Indian Government does not bring to evaluate the social, a religious, political, cultural and economic conflicts involved in the Punjab stalemate, in terms of devolution of power between the centre and the states.

In his extensive analysis Dr. Amrik Singh treated Punjab as typical case of indifferent management of national problems arising out of development from the last four decades. He thinks that

"The whole process of development today is jeopardised and thwarted by our failure to have solved the question of the emotional integration of the country. The two are interlinked with each other. We never saw the connection between the two and proceeded on the assumption that they could be delinked. Not only that, we assumed that we could push ahead with development but need not bother too much about the other problem. Events of the last few years have shown that this would not work, nor is this politically feasible. The situation in Punjab is a case in point."

He continues, "Four aspects of the Punjab issue require to be referred to and somewhat elaborated. One, the Punjab issue is partly related to the situation in

the state but basically it is a part of the crisis in which the country finds itself. Secondly, the crisis had been in the making right from 1947 and it had to erupt one day. That it erupted at this particular stage can now be seen as some thing not entirely illogical. Thirdly, the label 'communal' to the Punjab situation would not be entirely correct. While quite a number of Hindus have been killed, the overall thrust of the agitation is to defy the government and create conditions of lawlessness. In any case, there is no rioting in the sense the word is usually understood. Fourthly, the ethnic dimension is not to be disregarded either."

"How long can the Centre sustain its present policy? One prop of it is about to come unstuck. Once the Afghanistan issue is settled, the Pakistan border will suddenly come alive. It would no longer be possible for India to confront Pakistan with a hostile population in the rear; the geopolitical imperatives are bound to assert themselves sooner or later.

The second prop was the assumption that terrorism could be contained. It can be contained provided what gave birth to it is taken care of. That would amount to conceding what should have been conceded in the first instance. To put no more gloss on it, it is a no-win situation; the sooner it is settled, the better it would be."

Structural Analysis

Among the papers adopting the structural-analytical approach Dr. Amarjeet Narang and Ramashray Roy made all concerned think in more comprehensive ways about the issues associated with Punjab problem. Narang analysed the Punjab crisis out of distortions in the democratic development of India. He remarks, "Within the framework of these factors one has to try to find structured perception of the state of confidence in the Indian democracy. The Punjab crisis and Sikh problem, is no doubt a resolvable tangle. The Indian democratic system can regain its own health and the confidence of the Punjab's population by avoiding further dithering on the issues and equations. During the Last half decade or so the worst blow to nation-building has been inflicted by this dithering and consequent mess is there for everyone to see. Today a vast majority of Sikhs are alienated because they feel that equality before law and equal protection of laws was denied to them. Freedom was only an empty phrase. The leaders of the community were lodged in jails without trials. Black laws were enacted where suspects were presumed guilty and left to prove their innocence. This sudden reversal in the basic tenet of liberal jurisprudence further alienated them from the

stem. They were left at the mercy of the vagaries of an inefficient and corrupt executive.

There is a tendency to under-rate politics. There is a tendency to glorify the role of one police officials or administrative official. Of course, these officials have an important part to play as far as the day-to-day operational tasks are concerned. But the basic policy is important. And this must be determined by a political approach. One often hears of the importance of managerial efficiency. But let us not forget that one must first have a correct policy. Only then it can be implemented efficiently. The managerial tools are a means to an end, and not an end by themselves. Similarly may be the godly people wait for God to show them light because politicians have let them down very badly. But the fact remains that only secular democratic politics can be a long term antidote to communal postures adopted for short term gains.

Roy found the weakness of the Indian democratic set up in the weak leadership at the centre. He averred, "Faced with the demands of the Sikhs and their growing militancy, the centralized political authority found itself not at all in a position to concede most of their demands. This has been interpreted by the Sikhs as governmental intransigence which could be overcome only by more militant methods. But the government has taken it as a challenge to its own authority and has therefore responded in the same manner. It is this chain reaction that has contributed to the transformation of the politics of peaceful agitation to the widespread terrorism in Punjab today.

Dr. Zahur-ud-din affirmed, "Remember please keeping the country united is our primary concern and no price, however, great, is greater than this cause.

The Punjab crisis is the creation of all of us. All decision making bodies are responsible, no doubt, but we the people of India particularly the intellectuals consistently in Punjab are equally answerable for not playing our role befittingly. As in 1947 one stroke of a few misguided hands made the integrity of entire muslim community in India doubtful similarly the acts of a few mislead youth in Punjab have provided us an alibi to put the entire sikh community in the dock.

The roots of the problem in my opinion lie deeply buried under the debris of economic and social causes. This is simply sidetracking the issues to say that terrorists are playing in the hands of foreign powers. Such accusations can serve political purposes but cannot solve the economic and social problems which need drastic social economic measures Punjab did not need emergency or other curbs,

Continued on page 15

Who Can Bring Back

Buta Singh

Mr Kapoor was considered to be the most powerful officer of his department. Even if he were not the seniormost, he was no less in charisma.

His life had been a riddle. It baffled one and all. Madho, Mr. Kapoor's servant, had been cooking for him for the last ten years. Even he knew nothing about his master's life. He only knew how much food was to be cooked for him and when it was to be served. Of course he also knew the time Mr. Kapoor would return from the office and the time he would retire for the night. Madho dared not enquire about anything else. Mr. Kapoor, too, would never call Madho to his room frequently.

Kapoor would get up at four in the morning, shave and go through his morning routine. Exactly at five o'clock he would be out of the bungalow for his morning walk. He would never wake up his servant or ask him to shut the main gate.

He would come back exactly at six o'clock, take a bath and sitting on a prayer mat give himself up to meditation. A stick of incense continued burning all the while he meditated. At about eight o'clock he would sit at the dining table. The servant would serve him a chapati, a ladle of rice, a small bowl of curds, a plateful of some vegetable preparation and a medium size tumbler of milk, as lunch. He hardly spent fifteen minutes to take it. At once the servant would clear the table and place his office files on it. He would peruse these for three quarters of an hour, take notes and record his reactions.

At 9.00 AM sharp he would stop the work, dress and at 9.15 he would set off for the office. He had never asked for the staff car for getting to the office or coming back home.

A spacious bungalow had been provided to Mr. Kapoor. It had four outhouses for the washerman, the gardener and other servants. But Kapoor lived only in one room which served as his dining, drawing and bed room. The rest of the rooms were opened only when these were to be cleaned or when some guest was expected. Otherwise the whole of his universe was confined to one room.

All the officers not only at the division and the Board level but even at the Headquarters knew that they could not ring him up before eight in the morning, even there had been a major mishap. This was his personal order and none dared violate it.

Whether it rained in torrents or scorched black, whether hot or chilly winds blew, Mr. Kapoor would leave for his office, on foot, at ten minutes past nine. He was

tall, lean and fair complexioned. More than half the hair on his head had gone gray. His cheeks were sunken, the distance between his bungalow and his office—one and a quarter mile—had been measured by his steps and he knew exactly how much time he would take to cover it.

On the way, he would be unaware of all those who wished him. Sometimes some subordinate officer would stop his car by Mr. Kapoor's side, "Sir, step in, the sun is very hot. Or, 'It is raining.'"

Mr. Kapoor would simply say, 'Thanks' and without pausing for a moment would continue walking. At nine thirty he would reach his office. The peon would open the door and Mr. Kapoor would enter the office.

He would go to the small retiring room which opened into his office. He was supposed to take lunch and rest a while in that room. But he neither rested nor lunched there. He would, on reaching his office, wash his face, dry it with a towel and then sit in his chair to attend to work.

Many employees in the office were of the view that Mr. Kapoor was an eccentric. None had seen his wife or children. Some people thought that he was not even married. Some would say that he had deserted his wife. They would say, "No doubt he is a man of great ability but why should he work so hard for ten to twelve hours a day? Why should he be so foolish as not to understand this? He has no liabilities, neither wife nor son. This is why he allows none to come near his bungalow. A hypocrite. He poses to be a lover of solitude."

A few months ago a strange thing happened. Mr. Kapoor gave all the unoccupied rooms of his house to Ghanaya Lal Luthra, a retired officer with a number of sons, daughters and daughters-in-law. There were still three and a half years of Mr. Kapoor to retire. Mr. Luthra's daughter, her children and her husband and some times Mr. Luthra's sons and grand sons came to visit him, the moment they entered the bungalow, the whole of it would be filled with noise.

Mr. Luthra and his wife would often feel that they should vacate the bungalow. They had become a nuisance to Mr. Kapoor who loved solitude. Why should a man who has not married, be made the victim of so much noise that too made by the children and grand children of his subordinate officer? But Mr. Luthra could not pick up sufficient courage to say to him, "Sir, I beg to be excused for the noise. Kindly do charge me some rent for the bungalow. I do get my



pension. I have earning sons. My own house would be ready within a year and a half."

Mr and Mrs Luthra had been thinking of talking to Mr. Kapoor on these lines for the last five months but they could not get a chance to speak to him. Neither had Mr. Kapoor ever visited them nor could they dare talk to him, thank him and request him that they should be allowed to pay the rent for the accommodation.

One evening as Mr. Kapoor was reading in his room, Mr. Luthra hesitantly went in and saying "May I come in?" stepped in.

Without taking his eyes off the newspaper, Mr. Kapoor said, "Come in. Be seated."

There was silence for a few moments. Mr. Luthra said, "Sir, I want to make a request."

"Yes, please"

"Sir, I have been here for more than five months, but you have not charged me any rent."

"I do not pay any rent for this bungalow. Mr. Luthra, you know that old incumbents are not charged any rent."

"Water and electricity charges?"

"The bill for these is insignificant."

Mr. Kapoor had been reading and talking at the same time.

"Sir, I feel embarrassed. We use the whole of this bungalow and do not pay even electricity and water charges."

"This means you want to pass on your burden to me. Anything else?"

"No Sir, I have nothing else to say."

"Please go and take rest."

Crestfallen Mr. Luthra went out. He narrated the whole incident to his wife. Both were speechless. They were confused. But mentally they felt oppressed.

The news spread in headquarters that Mr. Kapoor had

sublet his bungalow to Mr. Luthra.

"How could a rigid man like Mr. Kapoor tolerate a family?" someone would ask.

"In old age loneliness is oppressive. An old man is frightened by even household objects. Mr. Kapoor may be a hard task-master but old age has its own compulsions, the arrogance of youth is of no avail in old age," someone else would come forward with this explanation.

Many things were said about Mr. Kapoor. But none of the guesses offered could suitably explain his behaviour. People would ask searching question of his peon. But however hard they tried to prove, his reply would be that Mr. Kapoor never visited Mr. Luthra's rooms. Mrs. Luthra constantly checked the children from making noise so that Mr. Kapoor was not disturbed.

After shutting up to children, Rupa would watch Mr. Kapoor through the grill when he left for his office and when he came back. This had become a regular practice with her.

While Kapoor went out, Rupa would watch him carefully. He had a fair complexion. Owing to the passage of time his face was full of dents. It was uneven. She would examine his features, watch his gait and match his face with the decades old portrait of Chander Prakash Kapoor who was her class fellow at the college. He too was lean, thin and fair. But many doubts would assail her mind and she would think "If you are the same Chander Prakash, why have you disfigured yourself? why have you wasted the whole of your life heaving sighs? Why should an educated man like you behave so foolishly? You have been taking slow poison. By now I am a grand mother. Life is to be spent some how. I have spent

mine. But by giving accommodation to us in this bungalow, you have made my life unbearably miserable. I can neither live nor die. I have neither beauty nor youth. Tell me what I should offer you? Why should I lose my credit with my children and husband at this stage of my life? Of what avail are these thoughts in the last days of my life?"

"My husband is a good man. He has never kept me in want. Even then I can see your face in the murky light of my memories. I remember only this much that it must have been extremely difficult for you to offer such a costly wedding gift. I knew your economic condition too well. You supported yourself by taking in tutions. But my mother had accepted your costly gift not because you were her daughter's class fellow or that you loved her. She had taken undue advantage of your gentleness and filled a glaring gap in the dowry. Who knew that the gift cost you the hard labour of many months?"

"As you were the unemployed son of a poor man, nobody was willing to marry his beautiful daughter to you. I also remember that you had left our house without even taking a cup of tea."

"Chander you are a great saint and ascetic. You are a man of dedication and devotion. You have earned a name for yourself for your dedication."

"After eight years of marriage, my husband told me that one Mr. Kapoor I.A.S. had been appointed as his officer. He did not talk to any one, he said, allowed none to enter his office, came to office in time and so long as he was in the office, none most outstanding and able officer of the section."

"Then he was selected as superintendent. I came to know that you were the chairman of the board. My husband was appointed the superintendent and you were transferred to headquarters. he could not even get an opportunity to thank you. My husband was transferred to headquarters. He was posted to various sections. When it was his turn to become S.P.O. you were the seniormost officer on that selection board as well. I was by then sure that you were my Chander who had all along been trying to save his Rupa from want and poverty."

My husband was an officer. You were also an officer. But you always tried to avoid him. I do not know why."

"A few days before my husband was to retire you called him to your office."

"Mr. Luthra, you are due to retire?"

"Yes, sir, Next week." "Congratulations. You have

served the government with devotion for thirty five years. How many children have you?"

"Three sons and one daughter".

dared leave even for a minute. Even the highest officers were scared of him.

"At first I thought that the officer was the same Chander Prakash. Then I felt even if you were the same Chander Prakash, it did not matter. During college days many friendships are formed and broken.

"Then I came to know that one day you called my husband to your room and offering him a chair you had asked him:

"Your name please?"

"Ghanaya Lal Luthra"

"Are you the head clerk?"

"Yes Sir."

"Are you married?"

"Yes Sir. I have two children as well".

"You are responsible for the section. Work carefully."

"My husband narrated this incident to me as well. But I could understand nothing. I thought newly arrived officers did ask such questions.

"My husband got an outstanding confidential report. He was proud of the fact that he was the

"Have all of them been married?"

"One son is till unmarried."

"Have you built a house?"

"Sir, I have married three of my children. You know the meagre salary I have been getting. I do own a plot and will build two rooms with the money that I get on retirement. Till then I shall pay the rent charged from those who are not in service."

"That rent is rather exorbitant."

"Sir, there is no way out."

"Portion of my bungalow is vacant. Please occupy it."

Mr Luthra accepted the offer and came to the bungalow with his luggage. The servants arranged the luggage in no time. But Mr and Mrs Luthra felt extremely embarrassed. They felt as if they were being crushed under the entire weight of that bungalow. How awkward it was. Mr Kapoor used only one room and the rest of the bungalow was at their disposal as if they were the owners...O God.

By now there was no doubt left in the mind of Rupa regarding Chander Prakash. She felt mentally sick. What a torture! She did not even talk to the man who had sacrificed his life for her. At times she thought it was better for them to vacate the bungalow. If she stayed there for a few months more she would surely die. She felt that an ulcer was growing within her. She would say to herself, "Why fear now? I am fifty three or four. Half a century has passed I have grand sons and grand daughters. Some day I should cook food for him. As he eats, I shall talk to him. This will bring mental relief. Chander Prakash I shall say to him, 'You remember you had said, 'Rupa, if alive one day I shall meet you.' How? When? Where? I could make nothing of

what you had said.

"Chander Prakash, I did not feel the pangs of separation the whole of my life. I had forgotten you. By giving us accommodation in your bungalow you have inflicted new wounds. Only death can cure these.

"When shall I meet you?"

"You were correct. It appears I was destined to spend my last days in your bungalow. Your touch will purify my soul. I will be blessed with peace. The man who one reigned over my heart, is so near me. No, Chander I never loved you. the favours done by you make me think in this manner. Otherwise my path was entirely different from yours. Layers of dust have settled on my feelings for you. I never knew that your pity will be the cause of my death." Tears welled up in her eyes.

Sitting in an easy chair, she went on weeping. then she remembered that it was a holiday. Her husband along with the younger sons, had gone to visit the elder son. She thought that Mr Kapoor must be absorbed in meditation at that hour. She got up, washed her face, adjusted her gold rimmed glasses, put a red, plastic bind on her forehead and softly and silently entered Mr Kapoor's room.

Mr Kapoor sat there lost in meditation. Facing him she sat cross legged and folded hands.

In just one moment she must have examined at his face a million times. She was trying to see the decades old features which had been imprinted on her mind all these years. She felt that Mr Kapoor's face was full of a divine radiance. There was no trace of restlessness on it. It radiated that serenity and depth of feeling which cures the world of its ills and brings salvation to human beings. It was that serenity which ensures that promises will be kept. His shining face created a storm in her mind. Tears flowed from her eyes. She put her head at his feet. The red plastic bindi fell at his feet.

Lovingly he raised her, put the red bindi back on her forehead and said, "don't weep. It was the will of God. None could change, it."

One of the speakers, Prof. Jagmohan Singh representing the Association for Democratic rights and Shahid Bhagat Singh Research Committee recalled that the three martyrs who Panjab can never forget - Shahid Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev had also achieved martyrdom on the same day - March 23 - fifty seven years ago. At that time recognising the greater revolutionary potential of these youths, British imperialism was determined to take their lives. In the case of Paash also, the decision to take his life appeared to have come from abroad as Paash had brilliantly carried out his ideological fight against the Khalistanis after he went abroad, (to the U.S.A.). Prof. Jagmohan also expressed the keenness of the Shahid Bhagat Singh Research Committee to bring together and translate the various works of Paash.

Paash - a poet whose pen was a sword in the people's struggles

Bharat Dogra

On March 23 terrorists killed a highly talented and brave Punjabi poet, Avtar Singh Paash and his friend, Hansraj. In this article, which is written in 3 parts Bharat Dogra first reports a function in honour of the poet and his friend. Then in the second part of the article he assesses the life of Paash as a poet, a political activist and a human being.

Avtar Singh Paash, a highly accomplished poet and an equally courageous political activist, was killed by terrorists on March 23. The terrorists' bullets also got his close friend, Hansraj. These killings were later owned by one of the Khalistani terrorist groups.

On April 10 a function was held in Talwandi Salem village. Paash's ancestral village and also the scene of this tragedy, to honour the two martyr sons of this village. This village is located at a distance of about 9 kms. from the town of Nakodar, in Jalandhar district of Punjab.

Tragically, incidents of violence have become the main talking point in the present situation of Punjab to such an extent that an important identity mark for many places is the violent incident that has taken place here. Thus as we drove past Nakodar town, our local friends pointed out the places where violent incidents have taken place in recent years. Then came Mallian village where indiscriminate firing had resulted in several deaths some time back, and finally the tubewell in Talwandi Sallm, where Paash and Hansraj were gunned down only a few days back.

Depth of Poetry

Paash was not just a poet of fire and storm; several of his poems, specially the better ones, showed a great depth too. Several of these lines, revealing the innermost identity

of the subjects or situations they dealt with and leaving a deep impact, lingered in my mind as I had my first view of the people and places among whom Paash had spent the greater part of the 37 years of his life and among whom his poetry was deeply rooted. We went to his house, a modest structure even though his father has been a senior officer in the Army. The now retired 'Major Sahib' greeted us warmly, but the immense sadness that had engulfed his entire personality could hardly be missed by him. "I have been able to survive this tragedy only because of the support of the friends of Paash like you", he said bravely even as the sounds of women crying next door could be heard clearly.

At a very young age Paash had won recognition for his powerful verse, and it was not surprising that several literary figures had come to pay their homage to their departed friend even though the time and date of the function clashed with some other literary/cultural events. Representatives of several left political groups, cultural groups and democratic rights groups also came, as did several common people of the area. So much so that soon an additional tent covering had to be installed to accommodate the growing number of people.

Two stalls had been set up to make available literature including the three poetry collections of Paash published so far and publications of democratic rights organisations. A few policemen were on duty across the road, but closer at hand were some armed guards from among the people themselves to ensure that nothing untoward happen in these days of trouble and turmoil where mischief cannot be ruled out even from functions held to honour martyrs. The fathers of the two martyrs sat on the stage severely and patiently, not showing the inner effort they must have made to control their feelings as speaker after speaker recall the many qualities of the heart as well as the mind of the martyrs.

The Martyrs

As some speakers also mentioned in passing about some other martyrs who had fallen to the bullets

of the terrorists in recent times, the tragic thought flared my mind that many such gatherings must have taken place in recent times, each to remember brilliant and brave sons of Punjab who had raised their voice against the efforts to spread communal poison, and had been killed for this. At the same time the fact that, despite these terrorist tactics, a large number of people gathered at such functions to honour the martyrs and reaffirmed their resolve not to give up the path shown by the martyrs, was like a ray of hope in this dark situation.

One of the speakers, Prof. Jagmohan Singh representing the Association for Democratic rights and Shahid Bhagat Singh Research Committee recalled that the three martyrs who Panjab can never forget - Shahid Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev had also achieved martyrdom on the same day - March 23 - fifty seven years ago. At that time recognising the greater revolutionary potential of these youths, British imperialism was determined to take their lives. In the case of Paash also, the decision to take his life appeared to have come from abroad as Paash had brilliantly carried out his ideological fight against the Khalistanis after he went abroad, (to the U.S.A.). Prof. Jagmohan also expressed the keenness of the Shahid Bhagat Singh Research Committee to bring together and translate the various works of Paash.

Memorial Trust

Communicating a similar decision on behalf of the Inquilab Kendra, Narinder Singh also announced the setting up of a Paash Memorial Trust.

Another speaker Jaspal Singh Jassi said that Paash wrote only that what he felt surely - his writing was never swayed by any temptation or any threat.

Working in very trying circumstances, Paash had emerged unscathed with this reputation untainted. He remained exactly what he was, no matter how much adverse circumstances tried to remove him from this path.

Darshan Singh Khatkar, leader of Kirti Kisan Union and himself also a prominent Punjabi poet in the progressive tradition, said that one of the reasons for killing Paash was to silence voice of protest against the resourceful Khalistan ideologies outside India. Secondly, it was an effort to strike terror into the progressive literary movement in Punjab which had given a very good account of itself in these times of crisis.

Foreign Aid and Poverty-some aspects II - What is stated may not happen

Bharat Dogra

In this second part of the article on foreign aid's contribution to fighting poverty in India the limitations of projects involving direct aid for poverty - reduction are pointed out. Then the claims of infrastructure projects aimed at speeding up economic development and in the process also helping the poor are questioned.

On the basis of the 1981 census data and the recent NSS data, economist Arun Ghosh had estimated, "In 1981 approximately 62 per cent of the total population may be said to have been dependent on earnings eked out from marginal farms or from seasonal employment in agriculture". In any case few will contradict the assertion that at least half the population of the country has at present no other option but to toil in agricultural, forest and fisheries work, or in various artisan works, or in quarries - on exploitative terms that make it difficult to meet the minimum basic needs of these families. Radical land reforms - or other radical changes relating to the working of forests, fisheries and artisan trades which could confer significant benefits on these people do not appear to be on the agenda of the government. Nevertheless some other steps to benefit them are taken from time to time by the government. There is a lot of evidence to indicate that their benefits are not reaching the poor in a significant way. On the other hand the advancement of various consumer industries, arms industries and infra-structure industries is inflicting several losses on them in the form of displacement, destruction of forests, pollution of water sources etc.

It is in this context that the role of foreign aid has to be examined. In 1985-86 the authorisation of external assistance to India amounted to Rs. 53989 millions up from Rs. 46920 millions in 1984-85 and Rs. 20791 millions in 1983-84 of this the loan component (in 1985-86) was Rs. 50855 millions while the grant component was Rs. 3134 millions. Actual gross disbursement of external assistance increased from Rs. 23540 millions in 1984-85 to Rs. 29380 millions in 1985-86. Net assistance (net of debt servicing) received by India also showed an increase from Rs. 11780 million in 1984-85 to Rs. 15710 millions in 1985-86. India's share in World Bank loan in financial year 1986 was 13.2 per cent in the case of I.B.R.D. loan and 19.9 per cent in the case of I.D.A. credits.

Projects for Poor

First consider the foreign aid for those projects which are supposed to

directly benefit the poor. Even assuming the most noble intentions on the part of the donor agency, the fact remains that the project has to be implemented in the same inequitable set-up and power structure in which generally the benefits even of projects meant for the exclusive benefits of weaker sections have not percolated to them. Of course donor agencies may conduct their own investigations on the implementation of the project but much trust cannot be reposed in the investigation done by outsiders having no deep knowledge of the area or close contacts with the poor, again assuming for the time being that the intentions at least are noble. Thus in many cases of such aid the projects may be good and the intentions may be noble but the reality of the existing inequalities and the related power-structure, including the collusion of existing propertied interests with the local officials, may preclude any significant benefits reaching the poor and on execution the project may end up as a distortion of its original conception.

However, the project may not always be good and the intention is not always noble - in fact this is quite often the case. A project promising to help some farmers may not have available to it the sort of experts who can go deep into the existing strength and weaknesses of the methods followed by them, of the limitations within which any change has to be introduced in order to be adopted widely and of other important, deep-rooted matters which are crucial to the success as well as the desirability of the project. Thus a project may not be good for the small farmers because their needs and problems have not been studied and appreciated deeply enough by the project officials. But there is one other possibility too. And this is that the officials may not even be interested in this knowledge. They may have an already established notion of what small farmers have to be coerced to do and this may be based on not just on their superior - than thou attitude but also on the commercial interests of big business which they want to advance. For example, ignoring the traditional low-cost methods of improving farm productivity which may even be pointed out to them by some local people or scientists, they may stress only those



methods which use fertilisers, pesticides and machines on a large scale. This is only one of the most obvious examples, there may be others in the area of forestry, fisheries, and other areas.

Away from Reality

Thus either because the intentions basically are not good, or because due to ignorance and inefficiency the project is not a good one, the objective of using foreign aid to benefit the poor directly may be defeated. Here it should be added that several of those so-called experts engaged in the task of finding the appropriateness of these projects and suggesting modifications generally seem to be quite far removed

from reality, both in their perceptions and their life-styles which look particularly revolting in relation to their work and their talk.

Now let's look at the foreign aided infra-structure projects and their relation to the problem of poverty. It is often assumed, even if it may not be stated explicitly, that by building-dams, power plants, or highways, ports etc. the overall economic activity and opportunities are being increased in which the poor will get a share sooner or later. Things may not work out this way in conditions of extreme economic inequalities and almost exclusion of a big section of the populations due to their lack of resources and skills. But the costs of displacement and ecological ruin caused by these pro-

jects have to be borne to a large extent by the poor. If the foreign aid for several of these projects had not been forthcoming, it is possible that several of them could not have been executed, or could not have been executed so rapidly as to inflict massive displacement and ecological ruin on the poor before they had a chance to prepare themselves for it. This harm is compounded by the ruthlessness of the funding agencies in persisting with even those projects like Tehri dam (funded by Soviet Union and Narmada dam (funded by World Bank) whose displacement and ecological costs are known to be particularly heavy.

Imposition.

At a wider level the availability of substantial foreign aid funds increases the ability of the present-day inequitable and unjust economic system to sustain and perpetuate itself. Also it enables the donor countries and multilateral agencies to increasingly impose development patterns and economic conditions on India which will spell higher profits and wider markets to the business interests based in the advanced countries, often at the expense of the ordinary Indian people. And a good part of the aid money goes in massive purchases from less than optimal sources which are tied to aid directly or indirectly ignoring better sources abroad and at home. Another good part goes in the salaries and comforts of experts brought from abroad regardless of their special ability (or commitment) to deal with local problems. (To be concluded).

Male MPs resent me: Thatcher

London, May 8 (AP): The British Prime Minister, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, has said some of her fellow politicians resent a woman running the country.

"Yes, it is rather patronising. The best compliment they can give a woman is that she thinks like a man. I say she does not, she thinks like a woman," Mrs Thatcher said in an interview with The Sunday Times.

The 62-year-old leader last week marked nine years in power, the longest by any Prime Minister this century. Mrs Thatcher is one of only 41 women in the 630-member House of Commons.

"The House is still very much male-dominated and there is something about them, a sort of Little Woman thing. It would be all right if I had gone into what they would regard as one of the traditional professions."

Mrs Thatcher's Conservative Party has won all three general elections it contested under her leadership and she hopes to lead it into the next election in 1991, and maybe the one after that.

Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers - A Report from Raipur, Madhdy Pradesh

Rajendra Sail

The condition of most farm labourers in the country is very depressing, but even among them the bonded labourers are the worst off. Several practices of bonded labour exist in agriculture and related work, but generally speaking the bonded labourers are those who, because of the debts incurred by them or their ancestors, lose the right to sell their labour freely and work for a 'master' at a wage below the already low prevailing rate or even without any wage other than the minimum subsistence food. Despite the enactment of laws and initiation of programmes to 'free' and 'rehabilitate' them, progress in this area remains tardy as the two reports below reveal.

The Chief Justice of India, Hon'ble Shri R.S. Pathak, has ordered an Enquiry into the plight of bonded Labourers of Raipur district in Madhya Pradesh. Treating as writ petition, a letter written by eleven social activists of Raipur, the Chief Justice appointed Commissioners on 8th May before the Court adjourned for summer vacations and asked for an immediate report.

The Social Activists have also submitted a list of 4382 bonded labourers spread over four blocks (Basna, Saraipalli, Pithora, Kisdol) of Raipur district, along with this letter to the Chief Justice of India. They have described, at length, the delay tactics adopted by the district administration in verifying and releasing these 4382 bonded labourers.

The letter also points out various forms of harassment that these social activists received at the hands of the district officials. The behest of local politicians, who stand to gain by the bonded labour system in the region.

The Chattisgarh region of Madhya Pradesh... consisting of seven districts mostly inhabited by tribals and harijans... has an age-old practice called 'kamiya

system' under which a person is kept in bondage over against the principal sum called 'murahi'. The child bonded labourers under the same tradition are called 'kuthias'!

Not Identified

Not a single bonded labourer was identified or released in Raipur District till the year 1984, i.e. eight years after the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976 came into force although 'kamiyas' and kuthias are clearly defined in this Act itself as bonded labourers.

The first batch of 683 bonded labourers in Raipur District were released at the Intervention of the Supreme Court of India on a writ-petition filed by a local voluntary organisation: CHATTISGARH KRISHAK - MAZDOOR SANGH. A total of 1586 bonded labourers had been released upto November 30, 1986.

For the villagers of Khairjhitki, Basna block, Raipur district, the Release and Rehabilitation of 14 bonded labourers was a 'dream' come true.

What they had not realised was that the Rehabilitation would turn out to be a trap forcing them back into 'bondage'. After spend-

ing days and months waiting, they were released in October 1986. But it took almost two months for the government officials to give them what the law describes as "ex-gratia payment" of Rs.500/-. Till then, they were neither getting any work with the rich farmers, who normally connive to 'teach a lesson' to those who were trying to break the age-old traditional pattern of servant-master relationships (Kamiya) in the Chattisgarh region, nor were getting any sympathetic hearing from the government officials, who consider them as 'extra-burden' on their already heavily loaded schedule'.

In spite of all odds against them, these bonded labourers were nevertheless happy to taste the 'first shower of freedom' in their lives, as they went around freely looking for jobs or even when they lay lazy chatting under a tree. Earlier as 'kamiyas' they had to go to the master's house in the early hours of the morning before sunrise the horizon, and returned only in the afternoon for few hours to rest and eat whatever they could put their hands on. In the second shift, they usually returned late in the night, thus completing a fourteen to sixteen hours cycle of work a day.

Many released went to work at government work sites, thus earning Rs. 10/- a day for the first time in their lives. Many used to say with sheer ecstasy on their face that "I had never seen ten rupees as a day's wage in my life'.

Corruption

However, when the Rehabilitation programme came, it came with a bundle of corruption. A pair of bullocks costing Rs. 2400

were given to them in Rs. 2900. Cloth worth Rs. 2500 were given in Rs.4000.

Some four to five lakhs of rupees have been siphoned out of the otherwise generous rehabilitation scheme for the released bonded labourers prepared by the Government of India in the Mahasamund Tahsil of Raipur district in Madhya Pradesh. The local government officials like the BDOs, AEOs, veterinary doctor Gram Sewaks, and labour Inspectors... emerge as the king-pins in this swindling racket robbing the victims of age-old exploitative system called, 'Kamiya'. In each case of Rehabilitation, anything between Rs. 400 to Rs. 1000 have been taken either as direct bribe or by manipulating accounts in the purchase of several items such as cloth, general items, cattle, land or bicycles. In the year 1986, some 653 bonded labourers have been released in the Raipur district, majority of whom belonged to the Basna and Saraipalli blocks. The independent investigation conducted by the voluntary organisations and social activists in the region point to the connivance of leading political figures of the ruling party.

Thousands of bonded labourers have taken to the path of agitation due to these exploitative methods of the local powerlobby in the region. About 600 bonded labourers sat on a DHARNA (sit in) in front of the Bus Stand in Basan, some 135 Kms away from Raipur.

Political Agents

According to the spokesmen of the voluntary organisations, a trend is already emerging with regard to the pattern of corruption. Usually, the list of released

bonded labourers is made available by the local government servants to the 'agents' of ruling political party. Armed with this list, the 'agents' would then visit the village and convene a meeting of the released bonded labourers mentioned in the list.

With the help of the local boss of the ruling party... who is, very often than not, the landlord, the money-lender and high-caste in the village... they would convince the 'released bonded labourers' that the 'Rehabilitation' is being done due to the generosity of their party and government. (At this stage, it may not be out of the way to mention that earlier when their applications for release are being screened by the respective bodies, the bonded labourers are harassed by these very elements who overnight become their messiahs.)

The region is likely to witness the release of some 5000 bonded labourers in the near future, as the Supreme Court is looking into the list provided by these social activists. The activists fear that millions of rupees will go into 'corruption' during the rehabilitation of these bonded labourers, if they corrupt practices are not exposed or acted upon.

tiously guards from the public eye the information by which his actions and opinions are regulated; he reserves his judgement of passing events till the latest moment; and then he records it in obscure or conventional language... The duty of the one is to speak; of the other to be silent. The one explains itself in discussion; the other tends to action. The one deals mainly with rights and interest; the other with opinions and sentiments; the former is necessarily reserved, the latter essentially free. It follows, therefore, from this contrast that the responsibilities of the two powers are as much at variance as their duties. For as, with whom publicity and truth are air and light of existence, there can be no greater disgrace than to recoil from the frank and accurate disclosure of facts as they are. We are bound to tell the truth as we find it, without fear of consequences—to lend no convenient shelter to acts of injustice and oppression, but to consign them once to the judgement of the world...

If the public writer shares in any degree the influence of the statesman he shares at least few of those personal objects which constitute so large a part of ordinary statesmanship... The responsibility he really shares is more nearly akin to that of the economist or the lawyer whose province is not to frame a system of convenient application to the exigencies of the day but to investigate truth and to apply it on fixed principles to the affairs of the world.'

National Interest

Cont. from page 6

that most Hindu MPs did not like to raise embarrassing questions on Punjab. (In fact, even my telephonic conversation with Swamy made me despair about the attitude of most MPs: when I told him about my experiences he merely remarked, "So, now you have come face to face with Hindu communalism.")

My experience with editors was even more disturbing. Of the six editors I called upon in Delhi only two assured me that they would look into the matter. The major papers—The Times and The Express—were frank about their line. They were not going to have anything to do with it. An editor I spoke to, said the story had been raised at the editorial meeting on Monday 25 April only to be turned down. On what ground I asked. "The national interest." Another editor said he

had been very interested in the story—in fact he had cut it out and pinned it on the notice board for his reporters to see. But ultimately his editor-in-chief had turned it down. The reason? "The national interest."

A third editor said: "I don't dispute your facts. But you are trying to frustrate my plans. I have been working on something for a long time and now you are trying to frustrate it." What was his plan, I asked. "We have to bash up Pakistan, not a full war but aggression, beat up their army in a couple of incidents. Then I tell you this terrorism will vanish."

I must have looked incredulous for he continued, "You don't understand mass psychology. Border people are always with the victor. Beat up the Pakistanis, show the Sikhs that we are stronger than the Pakistanis

and terrorism will languish on the vine. "Tum to aadhe Pathan ho tumhen to yeh baat pataa honi chahiye."

Forget for the moment how disgusting this frank admission sounds. Consider, instead, a general problem, what is the duty of the press?

In December 1851, Louis Napoleon, President of the French republic engineered a coup d'etat which would make him Emperor of France. Without consulting his colleagues or informing the Queen, Lord Palmerston, the foreign secretary, expressed his approval on behalf of Great Britain.

The Times wrote against him and Louis Napoleon. The French 'Monarch' was displeased with the newspaper.

Lord Derby, in an address in reply to a Speech from the Throne chose to lecture The Times for its outspoken language and to claim that "as in these days the English Press aspires to share the influence of states-

men, so also must it share in the responsibilities of statesmen."

The editor of The Times, Delane arranged for a reply to this preposterous suggestion. On his instruction Robert Lowe wrote two editorials which appeared in The Times of 6 and 7 February, 1852. These editorials are the classic statements of our profession. Space prevents me from quoting them in entirety; what follows are some paragraphs which should be seared into the consciousness of our editors.

"The press lives by disclosures; whatever passes into its keeping becomes a part of the knowledge and the history of our times; it is daily and forever appealing to the enlightened force of public opinion—anticipating if possible the march of events—standing upon the breach between the present and the future, and extending its survey to the horizon of the world. The statesman's duty is precisely the reverse. He cau-

Finding of Second All India Family Planning Survey

Report of Operations Research Group Commissioned by Ministry of H. & F.W., Govt. of India

The first All India Family Planning survey was undertaken by the Operations Research Group (ORG) in 1970. The objective was to have a comprehensive picture of the prevailing attitude and practice of family planning among people in India. The study was sponsored by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

In 1980 ... the second All India Family Planning Survey with almost similar objectives was commissioned and entrusted to ORG...

OBJECTIVE

This study was undertaken mainly with the following three objectives:

1. To assess people's knowledge and attitude towards family planning and the extent of contraceptive practice prevailing among them

SAMPLE SIZE:

...34,831 couples were finally interviewed on family planning and it related issues.....

SOCIO-ECONOMY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS SEX AND RELIGION:

Religion wise, 83.9 per cent of the respondents were Hindus, 10.5 percent Muslims and 5.5 per cent belonged to other religious groups. This distribution seems to be quite close to that of 1971 census according to which the corresponding percentage for Hindus, Muslims and other were 82.7, 10.6, and 6.7 respectively...

ATTITUDE TOWARDS FAMILY PLANNING

One chapter briefly discusses the attitude of couples towards family planning. Attempt has also been made to see how these attitude varies with religion.

attitude towards family planning is measured on a five points scale varying from very positive to very negative. The five points

are as follows:

- Very positive** : Approves F.P. immediately after marriage
- Moderately positive** : Approves FP only after having one or more children
- Neutral** : Neither approve nor disapproves
- Moderately negative** : Approve FP under certain conditions such as health of mother etc.
- Very negative** : Never approves family Planning.

Table : 6.3 ATTITUDE TOWARDS FAMILY PLANNING-BY RELIGION OF CURRENTLY MARRIED PERSONS

	Hindus	Muslims	Others couples	All
negative	13.06	28.6	12.8	15.2
Moderately negative	2.7	4.3	1.9	2.9
Neutral	1.0	2.2	0.6	1.1
Moderately positive	78.4	61.9	80.4	76.6
Very positive	4.3	3.1	4.3	4.2
Total (000's)	987145	12369	6488	117002

Table 6.3 shows that a relatively larger percentage of Muslim (29 per cent) than Hindu couples 17.6 per cent strongly disapproved family planning. At zonal level, the couples did not differ in their attitude towards family planning and in all four zones most of them (about 81 per cent) approved it.

Table : 6.4 PERCENTAGE APPROVING OR DISAPPROVING FAMILY PLANNING IN 1970 AND 1980

Attitude	Hindu	Muslim	Others
APPROVIES			
1970	60	53	69
1980	83	65	85
Difference	+23	+12	16
DISAPPROVES			
1970	40	47	31
1980	16	33	15
Difference	-24	-14	-15
NETURAL			
1970	-	-	-
1980	1	2	-
Difference	-	-	-

Table 6.4 compares the results of 1970 and the present study. The data shows that during the past ten years significant increase in the proportion of couples approving family planning has taken place. In 1980, 81 percent of the couples against 59 per cent in 1970 approved family planning i.e. during the past 10 years, the percentage approving family planning has increased by 22 per cent points. The table also shows that the quantum of increase was higher among Hindus (23 per cent points) than among Muslims (12 per cent points).

Idd and Indian Muslims

- M. I. Habibullah

Idd is one of the greatest celebrations in the entire Islamic world. Idd comes at the end of the holy month of Ramzan-al-Mubarak, which is the ninth month of Muslim calendar. It is also known as "Idul-Fitr", because every Muslim is expected to give 'Fitrah', which is a sort of charity or alms, on his behalf and on behalf of his family. Fitrah may be distributed to the poor and have-nots in cash or in kind.

Idul-Fitr is the culmination of a month long period of an endurance test. When a healthy Muslim, man, woman or child, has been ordained by Divine Law to forgo food, water and any intoxicant like tobacco, alcohol etc. from a particular time before sunrise to a particular time after sunset. It is a period of great challenge, a challenge to overcome strong temptations, a challenge, to put up determined resistance to the weakness of flesh. It is an exercise, which every Muslim takes annually, and is rewarded by finding himself purified in mind and body.

It is a great occasion of social get-together when barriers of differences are broken, when friends and foes embrace each other forgetting the past wounds.

Special Foods

In our country, Idul-Fitr festival is celebrated in different ways by the Muslims living in various States. While the Muslim in the Northern States prepare halwa, sewiyan as sweet dishes, those in Southern States prepare Kesari (halwa), Pal-sewian (Milk sewiyan), paniyarn, seedai, adarsham as sweet dishes. Iddies, vda, dosa,

sambar and chutney, murukku etc. are salty dishes, while biryani (a mixture of special rice and mutton) for food. This festival is a merry occasion for young boys and girls who get the opportunity of finding themselves dressed in their best, colourful garments and go to Idgah/Masjid for the Namaz (special prayer) with their guardians. Old women are busy applying henna (mehndi/mrudani), surma and scent to their young ones. It is also a field day for the young ones to collect Idd-tips from relatives. Idd also provides an occasion for the display of social arts like decoration of homes.

In common with other religious communities, Indian Muslims enjoy complete freedom of faith and worship. Evidence of this can be seen all over the country. The domes and minarets of mosques and Muslim shrines rise serenely alongside Church steeples and temples towers. Large Muslim congregations gather in the mosques five times every day, and on Fridays in particular as the muezzin's call for

prayer echoes forth from the minarets.

Joint Struggle

When India launched its struggle for freedom from the British rule, Muslims joined the hands of their Hindu brethren under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Outstanding among the Muslims who united under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership were Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, Abbas Tyabji, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Maulana Hussain, Ahmed Madani, Maulana Hifzur Rehman etc.

The world-famous monuments, like Taj-Mahal, Qutab Minar, Char Minar, Jama Masjid (Agra & Delhi), Dar-ul-Uloom (Deoband), Aligarh Muslim University, Jamia Millia Islamia, Osmani University, Red Forts (Agra & Delhi) etc. are the brain children of Muslims, which attract lakhs of visitors from foreign countries every day. Thus Muslims in India are an important tributary to the larger national main stream.



Muslims greeting each other after the Id namaz: spirit of brotherhood

Seminar On Punjab

Cont. from page 9

It requires only an approach which is imbued with sympathy and sense of understanding.

Dr. Faizi, added, "Denouncing terrorism in Punjab does not mean denying the legitimate demands of the people. In fact it is the failure to resolve the problems of the Punjab people that gave the opportunity to the extremists to whip up communal passions and to recruit young people into their fold. Developments subsequent to it have proved that the highly acclaimed Punjab accord was a travesty of a treaty. One only wonders about the position of the Govt. on the treaty now. And that happened to the recommendations of the several commissions. The Govt. cannot absolve the blame of driving the people into a state of despondence.

The participants were in no uncertain terms speaking under the shadow of persistent terror associated with Punjab problem. Kashi Ram Sharma saved his soul with the remark, "Violence and terrorism is against the Indian tradition and value system. It is the land of Buddha, Mahavir, Gandhi and Guru Nanak who preached non-violence and compassion through the ages. Moreover India is a democracy and in a democratic polity there is no compulsion, to resort to violence and terrorism. All the channels of protest are available in a democracy. Quite often violence and terrorism is generated by genuine grievances of the people or distortions in socio-economic systems. The feeling of social injustice, quite often provokes terrorist violence. If it is so, then the root of such injustice must be tackled.

Chandan Mitra from the Times of India provided a field goes account of the terrorist violence in Punjab. His high points, "It is easy to see that we are up against an extremely clever and sophisticated enemy. It is often said that the terrorists have no centralised command structure. I personally do not believe this to be true. While individual outfits and leaders enjoy operational independence, there is undoubtedly a great deal of strategic and tactical coordination. Although it is difficult to prove if terrorist leaders meet to chalk out their strategies from time to time, there is evidence to suggest that they do have periodic meetings across the border. There is some proof that they met last November at a time when the police had an upper hand and decided to pool in their resources and exchange information. Consequently, there was a spurt in terrorist activity from December 13 onwards when they gunned down Avinder Singh Brar and K.R.S. Gill, the SSP and SP respectively of Patiala. I believe

there is much greater coordination between terrorist organisations nowadays compared to a year ago.

It is also important to note that in many border areas, the situation is so precarious that the writ of the police does not run after dark. Understandably, many people here see the terrorists as the winning side, and regardless of their personal views are, willy nilly, helping the terrorists. Again there is no alternative to establishing armed superiority over the terrorists. They understand no other language, and it would be naive to think that political initiatives taken by the government would help to bring down the level of terrorist violence in Punjab. I am not arguing against political initiatives. However, I wish to point out that political initiatives serve a different purpose. They are necessary and must be undertaken to remove the alienation of the Sikh community as a whole. These initiatives are necessary also to boost the political morale of Punjab.

It was, however, left to K.F. Rustamji to make an extremely sensitive and balanced account of terrorism as a problem facing Indian Democracy. His perceptions: "A thought that haunted me all the time in Punjab was that for a long time to come, the threat of serious violence will hang over the whole region on the Afghanistan side the north-west frontier province of Baluchistan and Punjab on both sides. The Mujahadin may settle down. The Afghan problem may be forgotten. But Pakistan and India will be unsettled for a long time by all the weapons that have been thrown into this region. The danger to Pakistan is greater than to India, because the whole of the northern and western areas of Pakistan are in a state of ferment and unrest.

A large number of people have given their views on the handling of the Punjab situation. Many of them want a hawkish line to be adopted. It suits their image. But what is the hawkish line? What do the hawks want? They start with the assumption that what is required is the hard blow to "break the back of terrorists". They seem to think that the terrorists are wandering about Punjab with large placards marked "terrorist" on their backs and they have merely to be caught and shot. If the identification is not possible, shoot whoever comes to hand. The main ingredient of this programme is blood. If in the process some innocents are killed, it should be taken as a warning to all and sundry that they must keep away from extremism.

Such childish and inept thinking without any idea of the situation, and the difficulty of

identification and without any previous knowledge of how operations are conducted, passes for tough measures in the language of the hawks. To anyone who knows the methods and the objectives of the extremists, it is clear that this is exactly what they want. They want to administer to drive the entire Sikh community into accepting "Khalistan" because there is no other alternative.

It would be a mistake to think that only unplanned killings are the strategy of the "Khalistan" movement. There is obviously a brains trust somewhere, perhaps outside the State, which has experts on insurgency and social behaviour masterminding the unholy killings and bloodshed. The strategy which they have adopted has not been devised by grannies and dare-devil youth. What they want is the flight to capital and industry, the distress sale of property, the economic decline of the minority, migrations; in short a stab at the heart of Punjab.

The ups and downs of the operations will go on from month to month. There will be despair and euphoria alternating. It may take several months to come to a settlement, unless a leader of merit is thrown up and takes all along with him. The fact that the political elements have been silenced by threats of violence, and dissolution of the legislature, will be an added disadvantage. The biggest danger, as always, is that we may be misjudging the situation, arriving at a wrong assessment of the problem, and applying the wrong remedies. This too is probably the aim of the extremist.

They want the Government to concede that the situation is beyond the capacity of a civil administration. Therefore it should be handed over to the Army - another woodrose, military courts and martial law proclaimed after amendment of the Constitution, and the message conveyed that the last step has been taken. No further options are left. And we may still be where we are.

The only way in which success can be achieved is to wear the militants out, make sure that legality is observed, ensure that attempts to check them are done in the right way, that doors are always kept open for talks or negotiations - whether with priests, saints or political leaders of any party, and simultaneously follow up with good intelligence and good operational plans. There is no other way of checking such violence. We will be able to arrive at a settlement if we take care of ends and means.

All through I wondered whether we have really tried to understand the Sikhs. Really tried to build up grassroots democracy, tried to understand the trauma of violence which prevents the people from speaking against those who have constricted and silenced them.

The Sikhs are a fiercely self-

respecting people. Their spirit of laughter, their sense of humour, and ability to laugh at themselves is today muted because of the agony of Punjab. They are responsive to affection and sincerity. Like the Pathans, they are the best of friends and the worst of enemies. Amrita Pritam, Manmohan Singh, Rajinder Singh Bedi, Khushwant Singh, M.S. Randhawa and all the other who have enriched us - can we deny recognition to them? And Pratap Singh Kairon, the man who laid the foundation of modern Punjab by consolidation of holdings, which are feeding many of us today.

Terrorism is a war of attrition - no quick remedies can be found. In fact disappointment with the operations and results in Punjab may be due to the fact that we had raised false hopes. It is clear that the political framework is broken. The criminal justice system is congested. There are many handicaps - even grassroots democracy is not functional. The institutions have to be built up. Democratic impulses have to be activated which at the lowest level build up unity and positive action.

Secondly, there is absence of clear thinking, on which policy can be based. This complex problem has not been studied in depth even from the law and order point of view. We need a study in academic and research institutions of all types, a public debate every few months, a regular dialogue on radio and TV. A clear picture emerged in January, 1987, in the discussions that were called the Delhi Dialogue organised by Mr. George Verghese and Mr. Patwant Singh in which all interests of Punjab were represented. That is the only way in which we can raise, a national consciousness on the problem. We must not fight shy of discussing the subject publicly, that is a sure way to bring to the fore all facets of this problem and curb the fantasies of the ignorant.

The situation is bad, but is certainly not beyond redemption. If proper measures are taken, and most important of all, a proper attitude of mind towards Sikhs and to their grievances is developed, militancy will decline over the years. India is too big, too powerful, having abundant resources, and a vibrant philosophy, and she cannot be cowed by a small group that has taken a wrong path.

The Truth

Shailender Saxena spoke with some scepticism the entire truth



emerging out of two days of discussion. He was sceptical about the sincerity of the present regime to resolve Punjab crisis, yet he spelt out the consensus of the house admirably. His propositions: It is very difficult to suggest a solution. It can come only when involved parties will realize the futility of continuing struggle. Such realization can come either of their own wisdom or through a much nudged mediation of some independent and trust worthy forces. It is high time that both the parties have through introspection, admit their mistakes openly and take corrective measures. This will frame the way for reducing hostility and regaining mutual trust. In this relation it is suggested that:-

Terrorists and forces backing them should give up the idea of Khalistan altogether.

A review of centre-state relations be made through constitutional methods.

Violence must be given up totally.

Water and land disputes be settled at the earliest.

Centre has to understand that force alone can never solve this problem.

Centre should not make any political gain out of it.

It will be better if government offers some explanation in the form of a regret for Blue Star Operation.

Culprits of November riots must be punished.

Government should no more project association of terrorism with any community. At the same time it must distinguish between terrorist crime and normal crime and report them separately.

There is not an iota of doubt that continuation of Punjab problem is detrimental to the interests of terrorists, Akali Dal and other groups, people of Punjab and nation at large. A solution is urgently and desperately called for. It is a time when some independent forces should emerge and mediate between Government and leaders of movement. These could represent judicial, religious, political or philanthropic parts of society. People of Punjab and of rest of country should no more remain silent spectators to mass killings in Punjab. They should also exert their pressure on Government and leaders of movement for a early solution of the problem of Punjab.

THE
FORUM
GAZETTE

The warning of Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) president L.K. Advani, against attempts to "disown India's Hindu spirit" at the plenary session of the Bharatiya Janta Party at Agra is unequivocal. he has not tried to hide where the party's heart lies. the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS), which provides the BJP with its cadres, reportedly asked the party to vouch its allegiance to Hindutva openly.

Not that many people had doubts about the BJP's real face. But since the erstwhile Jana Sangh merged into the Janata Party and, after leaving it, rechristened itself the BJP, there has been some duplicity, with its leaders mouthing slogans in the name of secularism and communalism at the same time. The impression that one received was that but for its stand on dual membership—of the BJP and the RSS at the same time—it is secular like any other party.

Apparently, the RSS did not want the BJP to maintain its secular posture because the RSS has always believed that it is far better to concentrate on the Hindu vote than on those of minorities, particularly the Muslims, who in any case would stay away from any organisation having links with the RSS. Indeed, the BJP could never hope to attract the Muslim vote, though a few Muslims might vote for it, arguing that it is better to live with the devil you know than the one you do not. Why then, should the BJP hide its true colour?

RSS Position

In fact, the BJP, or its earlier incarnation, could never come to terms with itself. That it is a body representing and espousing Hindu interests is not unknown but what surprises one is that it has taken all these years to come out so openly, without being defensive, as a pro-Hindu party. After all, the world over, even in democratic countries, political parties with strong religious leaning have flourished and there was no reason why the BJP should have felt shy of saying that it is a Hindu party.

Thus far the BJP's thesis has been that the inhabitants of the country must "Indianise" themselves, and accept Hindu culture and traditions which, it holds, are an integral part of the Indian ethos. What L.K. Advani has done is to remove any illusions and commend that the "Hindu spirit" cannot be disowned. In

The BJP's true colours

Kuldeep Nayar

other words, a secular nation though India is, it must reckon with the reality of being a Hindu majority state, and even if the nation is not theocratic any attempt to disown the 'Hindu spirit' is not acceptable.

The BJP would probably have done better if it had spelt out this "Hindu line from its very birth. By trying to give itself a secular image, in which the party has never believed it has fallen somewhere in between. the Hindus feel that the party does not have the identity or posture that the Hindu ethos demands and the Muslims, in any case, have not trusted it.

Advani's assertion also indicates that leaders like Atal Behari Vajpayee, Bhairon Singh Shekawat and Jaswant Singh are in a minority and they have lost whatever voice they had earlier in trying to save the party from becoming an undiluted Hindu party. Result: today, the party has surrendered itself to the fundamentalists of the RSS.

L.K. Advani

In fact, when Advani replaced Vajpayee, it was clear that those with RSS backgrounds were overjoyed. For, it is they who favoured a person whose wholehearted loyalty as the BJP to be "more Hindu" than it would publicly admit. Some differences over this thesis have cropped up in the period between the departure of Vajpayee and the plenary session at Agra. Obviously, the RSS had ridden roughshod over dissenters, threatening to ask those who did not believe in the RSS approach to quit the BJP.



L.K. Advani

The BJP would probably have done better if it had spelt out this "Hindu line from its very birth. By trying to give itself a secular image, in which the party has never believed it has fallen somewhere in between. the Hindus feel that the party does not have the identity or posture that the Hindu ethos demands and the Muslims, in any case, have not trusted it.

However, the BJP will come a cropper if it become "all Hindu" because Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has been wooing the Hindu vote. With problems like Punjab, Gorkhaland and insurgency in the north-east the, Hindus, if they have to choose between the BJP and the Congress(I) would opt for the latter. If unconfirmed reports from the



Rajiv Gandhi camp are correct, then it looks as if the Prime Minister is bent on doing everything to please the Hindus.

It is difficult to understand what exactly Advani means by the "India's Hindu spirit". The freedom movement and the Indian Constitution, which epitomises the spirit of the movement, have imbibed the "spirit" of every community—of the Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis—apart from that of the Hindus. The struggle against the British was not based on the "Hindu spirit" but on the Indian spirit, which is an amalgam of Hindu, Muslim and other cultures. In fact, the strength of the Indian nation depends on the extent to which we can strengthen that spirit.

The emphasis on the "Hindu spirit" is going to give a boost to the fundamentalists among Muslims and other communities. One can see what happened in Srinagar. The irrepressible Imam of the Jama Masjid spoiled the atmosphere in Srinagar with his communal outburst. He even challenged the accession of Kashmir to India, simply because the Muslims are in a majority in that state. he played with fire and the result was the killing of innocents and the tarnishing of the secular image of the Kashmiris.



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Automatic Voltage Regulator. Smoothens out voltage fluctuations within a wide range of 70-290V

SCS

Soft-touch Channel Selection

Sophisticated systems to tune you on to any of the 12 pre-set programmes at the touch of a finger.

PET

Precision Electronic Tuning

For instant station selection and drift-free reception the convenience of push-button electronic tuning.

HFG

Hi-Tech Filter Glass

Special glass attachment to cut down unwanted glare and give you full viewing pleasure.



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